

VIPASSANA

Mindfulness Meditation



In The Mahasi Tradition

Compiled by jinavamsa

FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION ONLY
Published by jinavamsa aka leong yok kee

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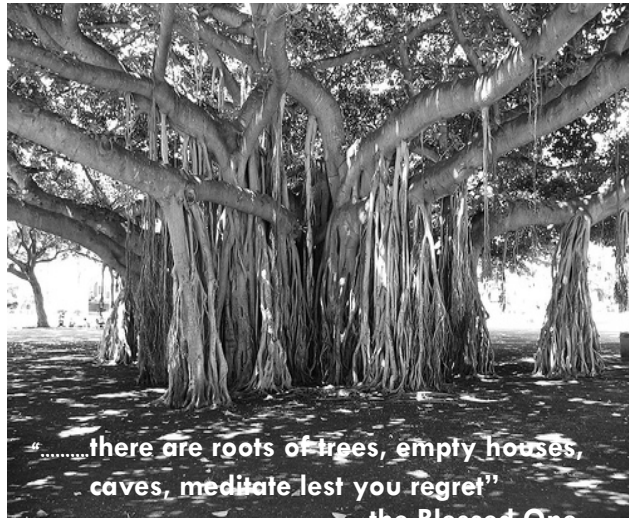
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a jīnavamsa Dhamma Literature

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	6
PREFACE	7
PREAMBLE	11
Insight Explained	14
Mind leads the Way	15
Some Guidelines	16
Seeking a Teacher	19
Teacher/Student Relationship	20
Caution in Meditation	22
Some Undesirable Practice	24
A Suitable Place	27
BOOK I: FUNDAMENTALS OF VIPASSANA AND THE PRACTICE	28
BOOK II: PRACTICAL INSIGHT MEDITATION	74
BOOK III: VIPASSANA JHANAS	89
BOOK IV: THE PROGRESS OF INSIGHT	112
APPENDIX:	142
NIBBANA	142
LET YOUR AIM BE NIBBANA	150
MOMENTARY CONCENTRATION	157

DEDICATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This present volume of the Blessed One's Teaching of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness or Vipassana Bhavana (Meditation) have been inspired by the compilation of the same by my dear Dhamma friend and respected Elder in the Dhamma; Brother Tan Guan Chai. Brother Guan Chai is a devoted student of the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, of whom my dear departed teacher, The Venerable Acara Suvanno Mahathera was also a devoted and diligent student.

In that admirable compilation; A Collection of Mahasi Sayadaw's Discourses on Meditation, Brother Guan Chai put together 7 of Mahasi Sayadaw's Discourses on Vipassana Bhavana. This present compilation serves to complement Brother Guan Chai's meritorious labour by presenting Vipassana Bhavana as taught by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw in a concise form. As an analogy, this present volume would serve as a "tika" to the volume presented by Brother Guan Chai and also serves as a token of admiration for the great Dhamma Duta, Brother Guan Chai has performed throughout his life.

For those who are not familiar with the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's Discourses, it would be to their gain to source a copy of Brother Guan Chai's compilation of the Biography of the Mahasi Sayadaw. In that volume would be detailed all the information of the Venerable Sayadaw and his work.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw propounded a method of training in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness as brought to him by his own teacher (the Venerable Mingun Jetavan Sayadaw), which proved to be effective, and this sequence of training is now known as the Mahasi Tradition of training.

This acknowledgement can only be complete by reference to the editorial work by Ms Carol Law in painstakingly weeding out the unsound grammar I have applied in this compilation. Thanks also to her and a few good Dhamma Friends, Gary Chan, Lai Mun and Brother Guan Chai who have critiqued the original rendering of the cover for this volume to the present copy. To them and to contributors who aided in the financial aspect of this compilation...Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu; and may all beings share in the merits of this Dhammaduta.

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa

PREFACE

In today's lax moral living, humans have thrown all cautions to the wind in their desire for sensual gratification. This was apparent to the Blessed One right from the moment of His Enlightenment 2600 years ago; He proclaimed:



This Dhamma which I have realised is indeed profound, difficult to perceive, difficult to comprehend, tranquil, exalted, not within the sphere of logic, subtle, and only those few who are wise can understand; other beings are attached to material pleasures.

With difficulty have I comprehended the Dhamma. There is no need to proclaim it now. This Dhamma is not easily understood by those who are dominated by lust and hatred. The lust-ridden, shrouded in darkness, do not see this Dhamma, which goes against the stream, which is abstruse, profound, difficult to perceive and subtle.

As the Blessed One reflected in this manner, He was not disposed to expound the Dhamma.

That scenario was 2600 years ago! The situation has not change for the better. The great meditation teacher, the Venerable Aggamaha Pandita Mahasi Sayadaw remarked: 'Humans more than others (in this the Sayadaw included devas, brahmas, and all other living beings) are making all possible efforts to indulge in sensual pleasures! Their efforts are mainly directed to physical well being and material gains. What these humans fail to see is that happiness and all forms of passions are conditioned by attitudes of mind. Not knowing this simple truth, very few will devote time to mental and spiritual development and training'.

Humans spend a great amount of time and money on outward appearances; beautifying themselves, living luxurious lives, improving their lives with wealth and health, having beautiful family members and friends, competing to live in the lap of luxury all their lives, having servants and helpers, eating and drinking to their hearts' delight. If you observe carefully, all these are of a material nature.

They fail to realise that all these mundane aggrandisements are but temporary joys that can and will be cut off at any moment of time, which eventuality, they of course are reluctant to recognise and accept, in the false belief that they themselves are able to position their own lives as and what they desire. All people subscribe to the myth that they are the 'captains of their own lives'. Their unhappiness and disappointments are truly great when the truth is finally forced onto them that such is not the case! The process of death and sickness is irrevocable! No one can escape them!

The Blessed One taught that the practice of Mindfulness is for all who seek to grow spiritually and attain to Enlightenment, the end of all suffering. He taught that the way to Nibbana can only be through mindfulness training; Satipatthana. The Sayadaw further added: The Blessed One, described a practical path to bring about this realisation. The method taught by the Blessed One can be practised by all, regardless of religious background, as its goal is simply to expand the practitioner's consciousness and bring him face to face with his mind. The Blessed One pointed out that we identify thoughts, feelings, impulses, emotions or sensations that arise in our minds as belonging to us; as empowered by ourselves; as created by an independent ego within us. Such mental activities delude us, and obliviously carry us along on a colourful journey to misery and destruction we do not immediately recognise as such.

The Blessed One explained that when we are able to observe the rise and fall, the appearance and disappearance of these various thoughts and feelings, we will be able to realise their inconsistent and impermanent nature, their inherent quality of dis-ease and most importantly, their ownerless state. When we are able to recognise these negative qualities of our thoughts and feelings, we will gradually develop a sense of distance and detachment from them.

Then with this right understanding of their nature, we will no longer feel a sense of ownership of these thoughts, feelings, impulses, emotions or sensations.

This sense of distance away and detachment from our various thoughts, feelings, impulses and sensations will lead us to a deep inner calm. Through constant contemplation, we will develop insights leading to supra-mundane wisdom, which has the power to open up our minds and break up the veils of illusion and ignorance to the reality that lies hidden within and beyond. The Blessed One taught that the workings of the mind are in reality, impersonal processes composed of large numbers of elementary psychic events He described as **dhammas**.

Through mindful observation of the workings of the mind and inferential knowledge gathered from the same source, one comes to realise that there is not found a permanent abiding entity, described as a self, an ego or a soul within anyone of us. The result of this realisation is an ever increasing detachment from the sensations, feelings, thoughts, ideas, impulses, etc, that are constantly arising. The full realisation of this insight develops pañña or wisdom that recognises the impermanency, dis-ease and ownerless state of these mental activities, furthering the sense of detachment from them.

The Blessed One taught a practical way of moral life; not just another system of metaphysical philosophy. It examines the ills of this sentient life, pin-points their causes, prescribes the removal of the causes, and shows the Way to the release from all suffering. Anyone can walk along the Way. But he must make the effort to step and walk. No one will pick him up or offer him a free ride.

You yourself must make the effort. Blessed Ones only point the way. Those who have entered the Path and who meditate will be freed from the fetters of illusion. – Dhammapada 276

What then is this Way to liberation? The Blessed One tells us that there is but One Way; the Way of Establishing Mindfulness that serves as the foundation of the whole system of insight meditation leading to freedom from unwholesome mental activities and delusion and opening the doors to Nibbana. The Blessed One sought the Way, found it, traversed it Himself, and only then did He, from His experience teach it to His followers; however, not all were able to ingest and realise the message He gave them.

So have I, monks, seen An Ancient Way, An Ancient Road followed by the Wholly Awakened Ones of olden times. Along that have I trodden, and the matters that I have come to know fully as I was going along it I have told to the monks, nuns, men and women lay followers. (Sam. ii 105)

One attribute of the Blessed One's Dhamma is that it invites everyone to "come-and-see" (ehipassiko); it is not a "must" see or "must" do. Sadly, though the invitation has been open from day one, it has largely been ignored and left in the cold, as few truly "saw" the gems of truth in His words. As such few will awake and follow strictly to the tenets of His Dhamma to find the Truth. It only remains for the true aspirant after liberation to awake and join the few in their quest for Freedom from suffering. Make no mistake, though many have "mouthed" the Blessed One's Dhamma, few have taken it up in all sincerity and honesty; few have seen the true "light" to want to practise His Dhamma.

Insight Meditation is for everyone, robed or lay, and all can attain to the stage of an arahant and be freed from the rounds of rebirth.

jinavamsa aka yok kee leong quoting: Bhadanta Sobhana,
Bukit Tinggi, Pahang Aggamaha Pandita
April, 2011 Mahasi Sayadaw

PREAMBLE



The late Venerable Suvanno Mahathera (1920-2007) of the Buddhist Hermitage, Lunas, popularly addressed as Bhante said: To effectively apply the knowledge of Satipatthana Vipassana (Meditation on Mindfulness) certain premise must be introduced in the beginning. This is a prerequisite to the understanding of the terms and phrases applied in the literature given here.

FIRST: In everything that we do, success can only come about when we begin with a correct understanding or view of our intended goal. Such correct view can only be brought to fruition through a correct practice, which in itself can only be realised through proper investigation and guidance.

The Blessed One has said very clearly that His Dhamma can only be realised through a gradual training and He gave the technique for such a training.

To do himself justice and to be convinced about the Dhamma, the meditator should investigate thoroughly the merits of what he has been told. Only when he is sufficiently impressed with the truth should he then begin to practise the Dhamma; such a practice will definitely gain him insights into the reality of the Dhamma; only in this way will he realise the wisdom and merits of the Blessed One's Teachings. For the Blessed One has advised that one should investigate well before one takes up what one hears. The Blessed One advised:

Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing, nor upon tradition, rumor, what is in a scripture, surmise, an axiom, specious reasoning, a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, another's seeming ability, the consideration, "The monk is our teacher. Kalamas, when you yourselves know: These things are good; these things are not blameworthy; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness; enter on and abide in them."

The phrase; **'when you yourself know'**, is to mean acquiring a knowledge, especially a supramundane knowledge, **based on one's own experience, a reality, a direct knowledge as realised by oneself**; not from books or hearsay.

Wisdom of a Vipassana practitioner is not acquired in the same manner of a formal education. The knowledge, intelligence and mundane wisdom of an ordinary mortal is acquired through academic means, such as schools, colleges, universities, books and such like material; whereas the knowledge and wisdom realised by a Vipassana practitioner is solely through the practice of mindfulness exercise; an experiential realisation.

Therefore, the correct view in wanting to learn and practise Vipassana must be soundly established in the meditator's mind.

SECOND: What then is the correct view when practising Vipassana? The Blessed One answered:

"This is the only way for the purification of beings, the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, the destroying of pain and grief, reaching the right path; the realisation of nibbana; namely; the Four Foundations of Mindfulness". In other words, the practice of Vipassana.

Vipassana Insight Meditation or Mindfulness Meditation has **freedom from all suffering** as its one and only goal. The very basic nature and universality of its goal puts it into a unique niche where it can be practised by all, regardless of religious beliefs. Its simple practical path to a very profound objective truly appeals to those who are earnestly seeking an end to their pain and sorrows.

The Blessed One's teachings is a universal discipline, suitable for all and for all time; for He invited all (not only "buddhist"): "akaliko, ehipasiko..." come and see for yourself, the Dhamma is unconditioned by time or season, it is timeless".

Therefore, one must view Vipassana as the only way to the eradication of defilement and of reaching Nibbana; and just as climbing a mountain will open up a panorama of sights on the way up, so the practice of Vipassana will bring along many side benefits on the way.

We need not seek them, as long as we practise correctly, the accompanying benefits will blossom forth in their own good time. Without the wisdom of Vipassana, we are blind to the reality inherent in us. Realities are true wisdom in disguise, you need to see reality to realise the kernel of wisdom within.

There are those who may want to invest their time and training with the view that meditation will bring them untold powers. This will be considered a perverted view in the wish to meditate and will bring along painful results that may not only be for this life but lives to come.

THIRD: There is the necessity to unlearn all that one has conceived in regards to the realities of life, its concepts, myths and hearsays; which is to say one must view the practice of Vipassana with a sincere mind. One must start with a clean page; one must be prepared to have fresh pure air breeze through one's mind and cleanse away all the debris that had accumulated and stagnated within for aeons.

FOURTH: To begin your journey to explore and realise the wisdom of Vipassana that will take you to total freedom from all forms of suffering, you need to make a resolve to put great effort into your practice, for the way is like climbing an extremely high mountain, long and arduous; the climb is tough, have no doubt about it, but the end result is worth more; much more than all the pain you will encounter. If you will be but determined, patient and persistent in your effort, you will surely be rewarded by results far, far beyond what you think it is all about. This has been guaranteed by the Blessed One who brought this to us.

You should be firm and determined in your resolve. As a boost to your resolve, carry along in your mind the rarefied thought that all those who had attained total freedom from suffering [**Nibbana** (refer to Appendix)], including the Blessed One Himself, had trodden this very path of practice that you are now about to travel on. The more earnest effort you put into your practice, the more your concentration becomes dynamic and sharp, enabling insight to materialise, so that you will have no obstacles in your path towards fulfilling your resolution. In this you can find no help from anyone, not even from the Blessed One. Each step of your practice must be guided by investigation, patience and wisdom, and never by superstitious beliefs and ignorance. Blind faith and superstition conflict with the arising of insight, creating unnecessary hindrances to your practice.

INSIGHT EXPLAINED

It is timely that a few words on Insight be put forward so as not to be ambiguous about what it is meant. Most dictionaries explain it as a chance to understand something or learn more about it or the ability to notice and understand a lot about people or situations. In the context of Vipassana Mindfulness Meditation, it has the wider in-depth connotation of knowing and realising, not by ideas and concepts but through direct experience, the ultimate reality of ourselves and from this direct experience, we then are able to realise the reality of our existence.

Insight opens up the mind infusing it with clear supramundane wisdom that will wipe away layers of distorted vision accumulated through many rebirths. These distorted visions bring along delusions of the self; clarity of the mind brings along new mental state that sees things in its ultimate essence.

Delusion of “the self” is ingrained in all of us, so much so that we have become dependent on this “myth” identity and hold the belief that this “self” is our alter ego that empowers us in our thoughts, speech and deeds. In our attachment to this “myth ego”, we fail to recognise that “man” is a “label” for us to differentiate it from another living being, or for that matter another type of living being, else we cannot distinguish an animal from a human and we cannot separate a female from a male. However, behind this “illusion” of “man” are things that constitute this “man”. “Man”, in its basic essence is a combination of matter and a set of consciousness that truly empowers “man”.

The matter parts are made up of water (blood and lymph and all that are liquid), earthy material (flesh and the material elements such as the organs), air in the form of the breath we breathe to live, and the heat that is built up by the consumption of food. In essence, “man” is but water, material matter, air and heat. These four material elements are the essence of “man” in the ultimate truth. ***Intellectual knowledge is not insight!*** Through Vipassana, we will begin to “see” and realise further the deeper truth of the “make-up” of “man”. When our minds are in a dynamic concentration mode, Pure and Clear, both developed through Vipassana Meditation, we see clearly the Mind acting to move the Material Elements. We then realise that it is Mind and Matter (nama and rupa), that constitutes “man”. This is elementary insight, beginning of wisdom, the first step in the eradication of ignorance.

MIND LEADS THE WAY

One of the great Truth, the Blessed One taught is that ignorance causes us to see things the way we want to and that is through "rose tinted" delusion of desire; desire for sensual pleasures, desire to gratify our greed for all and anything that please us and desire to rid ourselves of things that are unpleasant.

We are most of the time pickled in ill-will and angered caused by delusion that others are seemingly better or worse and more fortunate or less fortunate than we are; that we are the victims of others.

The fact of the matter is that our lives are built upon misconstrued concepts and ideas and these fallacies confuse and delude us daily and totally; we are conditioned, way before we were even born to be stuck in a whirlpool of delusion, desires, habitual tendencies and a host of pre-acquired passions. Through aeons of life times, we have not been able to see and find our way out of this cesspool we have ignorantly propelled ourselves into.

It is only through insights arising from the practice of Vipassana that we begin to realise that all the beliefs and concepts we imprison ourselves within are not necessarily true, good or wholesome. For example; our new found insights tell us that all things are impermanent; our very lives are impermanent, our possessions are liable to be stolen, lost or possessed by others; whereas all the time till now we have thought otherwise.

We also realise that the "self" that we are deluded to believe we are, is but fleeting and evanescent; without a solid core or any form of powerful ability to help others or ourselves.

Through the practice of Vipassana Meditation, we are looking at ourselves through different lens; the lens of reality and absolute truth. The picture is vastly different from what we had thought them to be. Whereas before, we had lived lives groping and wandering with our visions opaque and muddied; Vipassana helps us define and clear up our dust-filled visions and we can now truly see things as they really are! This is true insight into our existence.

SOME GUIDELINES

At this juncture we share with you some guidelines to help fulfill your aspiration to meditate. The first necessary decision to make is to resolve to meditate alone and not in the company of friends or even a friend! There are many valid reasons why this is so.

- Meditation is a solitary practice and is all about looking into the mind and seeing reality, moment to moment and for this you need to be totally alone to be solely aware of the mind. That is the reason the Blessed One exhorted: “there are roots of trees, empty houses, caves, meditate lest you regret”.
- Friends and others have their view points and concepts and may seek to impose them on you or even if not, you may be influenced by certain view points which may appear logical. Their good intentions may not be well placed. “Good” friends have tendencies to share, talk and take pride in the “good” results of their meditation and this sharing may be wrongly construed, contribute to confusion, anger, jealousy and delusion.
- Groups or companion will place undue pressure on you to be result oriented and be “within the group”. Peer pressure will jeopardise your meditation efforts. Unnecessary discussions will take place and views expounded by others besides your teacher, may lead to confusion.
- There is Only This One Way to Liberation and this unique way can only be travelled along by one-self alone; one cannot bring along a passenger, a friend, a parent, an offspring, etc. etc.; likewise others cannot bring you along. It is not a social event; it is lonely and it is difficult. This is a solitary journey and you don’t need any distractions. Your resolve need to be steely firm to complete the journey!
- It is a long, lonely journey and you need only be responsible for yourself, you may seek the advice of your teacher and guide alone; others will only distract your mind. You should go it alone in your retreat, and leave all mental “baggages” behind and for this period you are going to render full attention to your practice. Make arrangements that all matters are to be handled by others and that you are left alone to meditate.

- Reading by itself cannot lead to true understanding, but theory and practice together will render a profound understanding of the practice and realisation of insight knowledge.
- There are bound to be difficulties as there are in anything new. Only after some practice can results be forthcoming and these “results” may not be what you have expected. Initially, they are not “earth-shattering” and can be so subtle that the immature mind may not see or realise the results as such. Throughout the practice there will be varying experiences, which can have various effects on you and become fruitful only if the practice progresses correctly.

The moral is: Do not be result oriented in your practice and have no expectation that you will find answers to all your ills and concepts at the first sitting. Worthwhile “results” will appear as your practice matures. When they do you may not even recognise them as such. Your only responsibility is to sit, follow your teacher’s instructions, watch your mind and note arising mental and physical phenomena. Other matters are not your concern during the period of your retreat.

- Mindfully stick to the instructions of the teacher. Paying careful attention to the teacher will enable good progress which will in turn develop confidence in yourself and the practice.
- Sufficient time will be allotted for regular interviews between teacher and students. These interview periods are essential for teacher and students and are usually done on a one on one basis, as these interviews are personal and pertaining to the practice of the student. Here is a good opportunity for both to know each other well and put them on a firm togetherness foundation. Be honest and straight forward in reporting to the teacher. In the course of your practice, you will encounter (in your own concept) good and bad experiences. Each and every individual will have differing experiences in meditation, no two individuals will have exactly the same experiences and results. Hence, you should not discuss your meditative experiences with anyone except your teacher.
- In reporting to the teacher, do so factually. You may be tempted to report what you consider the good side and fail to report plainly and frankly on other experiences.

Though you may think that your sitting is not good or very good as the case may seem, it may not be so in the view of the teacher and only by knowing the true situation, can the teacher be able to give correct and beneficial guidance. Get clarification personally from your teacher on any point you are not clear, do not seek clarification from fellow meditators. No question is silly in the context of your meditation. It is only silly when you plod on based on faulty understanding.

- When encountering difficult stages, you are expected to report these and seek your teacher's support and encouragement. Then only is there any opportunity to give correct advice for the development and progress of the practice. Hence it is very important that you report your experiences to the teacher and only to your teacher very plainly, frankly and factually.
- Be industrious and diligent in your practice. Be always alert and ready to note with continuous effort as soon as you are awake. It is your main and primary duty to note whatever feelings and sensations arising in body and mind. Even minor physical movements such as moving of the hands, movements in the eye-lids, changing of clothes, and such like activities have to be noted with keen awareness. In intensive practice, try very hard and have unshakeable resolution.
- You may, in a hurry, try to do a few things at a time. This is to be discouraged as details in these actions and movements will be missed. In eating, in using toilet facilities too, you should do so with full awareness. Note all movements with awareness without missing anything whatsoever. There is nothing which should not be noted. Every physical and mental occurrence is to be noted mindfully.
- Refrain from talking, eating and sleeping excessively. Talking is a very major obstacle in the practice of meditation. Avoid talking while practising intensive meditation. Should there be a necessity to talk, note the intention to talk and limit the duration of such talks.
- Do not over-eat; you are to eat about four or five mouth full short of a full stomach and fill up with water, soup, or fluid of any kind.

- Sleep should be reduced to a minimum. During intensive practice, four hours of sleep will not cause any problem and you should not have any anxiety of having just four hours of sleep in the daily schedule.
- Practise mindfulness at all times. Keep mindfulness constantly in front of you. Think mindfulness at all times. Make mindfulness your watchword in all thoughts, speech and actions. If you are not mindful, for example, of the sound heard, you may develop either attachment or aversion to the sound. Therefore you should always note sound as such, so that the sound will pass away as merely sound, without any accompanying attachment or aversion.
- Act as if you are a sick person and not move quickly in whatever action you perform. Walk very slowly, eat very slowly, and even talk very slowly. In so doing, you can note all the mental and physical sensations and will soon develop the habit of mindfulness.
- Make persistent and continuous effort to note without let up. Note from the moment of waking up in the morning until going to sleep at night, not only in sitting and walking sessions, but also in the daily activities. When the moment to moment concentration is sustained, you will be able to develop progressive insight knowledge successfully within a reasonable time.

SEEKING A TEACHER

Deciding on a teacher will be the most important step in your aspiration to meditate. You should in all fairness to yourself and the teacher go about this seriously with wisdom and consideration. First of all you must keep in view the true goal of the Blessed One's teachings, which is nothing less than doing away with ignorance, getting rid of defilement and achieving enlightenment. Therefore, the proper teacher, proper instructions, proper practice and proper conditions are imperative for successful progress through all of the various stages of attainment from the first insight knowledge through to the final result. With this in mind, the **Proper Teacher is An Essential Factor**. If one is striving to achieve enlightenment, one's teacher must be a competent, qualified meditation master with real time invested in the practice himself.

The criterion is a teacher who has **Practised Correctly and Well** for a quality period of time. In this it is meant a person who has actually sat and meditated under correct instructions and at the same time well versed in the Dhamma. You will note that “a person” was phrased, which is to indicate that the teacher may not necessary be a monk or a nun. It is immaterial what category the teacher belongs to; robed or lay; as long as he or she has proven meditation and teaching skills and he or she is able to pass them on.

There are those who can teach and there are those who cannot teach as exemplified by a Blessed One and a paccekabuddha. A paccekabuddha is a Buddha, but he is devoid of the skills to pass on the Dhamma and lack the ability to teach meditation. Hence, he does not have the ability to teach though he is already an enlightened being. A Blessed One practises and teaches the Dhamma that is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good at the end.

TEACHER/STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

In the days of the Blessed One, there was no such institution as a meditation centre; the Teacher was the Blessed One Himself and after



Him came the arahant teachers (theras). Each had their own students and these were mostly monks. In those days, a teacher was one who was a good friend; a person who was there to help with things pertaining to meditation and Dhamma. He was someone who had extensive practical

experience and knowledge about meditation practice and Dhamma and be able to answer questions and help clear difficulties. His responsibility was to teach and it was up to the students to be diligent to meditate; it was not necessary for the teacher to sit and supervise every detail of the students.

In the time of the Blessed One, lay persons as well as monks were His students. The instructions in meditation were given freely. In today's conditions, we have well laid out meditation centres with monks as teachers; in most cases the students do not have to pay any fees for the practice; however donations are required to maintain the centres and temples. Teachers and students relationship must be well spelled out in order to minimise inconvenience and misunderstanding. There are strict rules concerning student's behaviour and attitude.

Students should render respect and take heed of the instructions of the meditation teacher seriously and in earnest during the time in training, and be able to receive full attention while at a retreat, as after all it was through a series of qualification before they selected the teacher they now have. If they do not have respect for and confidence in the teacher, they will not give much thought to the teacher's words. Here at the very beginning lies a root cause of failure. So affinity and sincerity is of the utmost importance.

What is really needed is a close bond of friendship between student and teacher in which the teacher demonstrates a fatherly concern while teaching. If there is a relationship akin to a father-and-son affection the atmosphere for training will be comfortable, pleasant and stress free, conducive to learning. With an attitude of respect and confidence in the teacher and sincerity in the training, teacher and students will be mentally together; success in the practice is assured.

For a more meaningful meditation experience, this close bond should be built on confidence in and affection for each other, based on reason, insight and compassion. However, they should not be overly attached to each other.

As for the teacher, he observes the behaviour, manners, mentality and disposition of the students rather than just taking their words at face value. He should examine the students as thoroughly as a doctor would his patient. In an atmosphere of sincerity, respect and confidence students should not be reluctant to talk frankly about their particular disease (mental imperfections); the teacher can then administer his remedy.

Patience in huge doses is recommended as it takes a long time for a teacher to get to know the temperament of the students.

As valuable time is needed to develop such a state of trust, sincerity and confidentiality between teacher and students, it is advisable that students be discerning to ensure a wise selection so that time is efficiently used in order to avoid "jumping from teacher to teacher".

CAUTION IN MEDITATION

Few people meditate for the right reason; this is understandable as ignorance about the objective of Vipassana meditation is widespread. There are many who meditate in the hope of having some unusual experience as they regard this as progress of their meditation. This is lack of right motivation for the practice of meditation. Right motivation is connected with renunciation (non-greed), goodwill (non-hatred), and non violence.

If one approaches meditation with neither right understanding regarding suffering and its cessation, nor right motives, then one's meditation is liable to seriously go astray. There have, for instance, been those who took up meditation as a way to invest themselves with power, and others who have seen it as a quick way to gain both disciples and riches. Fame may also be an unworthy motive. All these, as motives for meditation, may easily lead the unwary into illness, and sometimes mental unbalance.



Pride is also a great danger. It comes in several forms. One such is the pride of the person who has seen manifestations of light during meditation, and supposes this to be the sign of attainment of results.

Then there is the pride of one who attains to some form of concentration, and as a result assumes that he has attained special powers, and this can be a very powerful factor in convincing himself.

Quite ordinary people who take up meditation may be aware of the common "superior" attitude: "I make an effort, whereas you . . .," or, "I meditate every day, whereas you . . ." Pride is a great obstacle to any progress, and while it is only a Blessed One or an arahant who is entirely rid of it, everyone should have the mindfulness to check it.

There is the danger for the person who constantly checks for progress. He is sure that he is making "progress" because in meditating he sees lights, hears sounds, or feels strange sensations. He becomes more and more fascinated by these phenomena as time goes by, and gradually forgets that he started with the aspiration to find the way to Enlightenment. His "meditation" then degenerates into visions and strange happenings, leading him into states of delusion.

There is no surer way for a meditator to become entangled than this. Fascinating though all such manifestations may be, they should be mindfully noted by resorting to bare attention, never permitting discursive thought regarding them, and thus avoiding these distractions.

Another danger is trying to meditate while one is emotionally insecure, unbalanced or immature. An understanding of the value of meritorious deeds or skillfulness will come in useful here. As merit purifies the mind, it will be an excellent basis for mind-development, and both the ease with which concentration are attained and the ease with which insight arises are to some extent dependent upon merit. Meritorious deeds are not difficult to find in life.

Obviously it follows that to try to practise meditation while all the time retaining one's old cravings, likes and dislikes is, to say the least, making one's path difficult. Meditation implies renunciation, and no practice will be successful unless one is at least prepared to make effort to restrain greed and hatred, check lust, and understand when delusion is clouding the mind.

How far one carries renunciation and whether this involves outward changes (such as becoming a monk or nun), depends much on a person and his circumstances, but one thing is sure: inward renunciation, an attitude of giving-up with regard to both unskillful mental events and bodily indulgence, is absolutely essential.

In certain cases, a meditator, after a long period of non-practise, undertakes a longer period of meditation practice. He tries very hard, but though his energy is ever so great and he sits and sits, walks and walks, and still his mind is disturbed and without peace. He does not realise that meditation is not in fits and starts. It has to be continuous in tandem with retreats and daily mindfulness, each dovetailing into the other. He needs to develop a balance in the faculties; Faith, Exertion, Mindfulness, Concentration and Wisdom.

The meditator needs to realise that meditation is not unlike a balancing act. Initially, with great faith he applies strenuous energy to his practice but he may not have discerned the mental strength he will need for his practice; this will not help in developing concentration; without a firm concentration his mindfulness in the practice will be lax and all these budding and yet undeveloped mental and physical faculties will not contribute to insight arising.

But once these Five Faculties are well developed and are balanced in maturity, they will become Five Strong Pillars for his practice. The equi-balancing of these Five Faculties; Faith, Energy, Mindfulness, Concentration based on Wisdom is of great importance in his progress of meditation.

It is through straining or forcing meditation practice that many emotionally disturbed states arise. Sudden bursts of intense anger over insignificant trifles, fierce cravings and lusts, strange delusions and even peculiar fantasies can all be produced from unwise arduous practice.

Those who are without a teacher should proceed with utmost caution, making sure that their development of mindfulness is well advanced indeed. If they are mindful and see that despite their efforts, their meditation practice is making no real difference to their lives in terms of greater internal peace, or externally in terms of meaningful relationship to others, then it should be apparent that something is wrong.

Meditation should then be laid aside for some time while making effort to contact a genuine source of information to seek advice, preferably a living meditation master; in the meantime giving due attention to unsolved moral problems, which unless sorted out, will not permit the mind to develop; and making a great effort to live one's life according to the Blessed One's Dhamma. When quite basic matters of this sort are neglected, one cannot hope to make much progress in the practice.

Significant and dramatic results will never be apparent in the beginning stages of your practice. What will be apparent is the changes that will begin to show in your own mental state and in your speech and deeds. A growing calm and peace will pervade both your mental and physical being. You will stay in these states even under extreme situations of happiness or sadness. Your mindfulness in thought, speech and deed will be your guide under all circumstances. These are but the beginnings of worthwhile results that will be a part of your life as you progress in your practice, leading to further spiritual growth and the renunciation of basic desires and cravings.

SOME UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES

Much good can be said about a regular mode of practice; as in regular mindful observing the rising and falling of the abdomen whenever phenomena arise; regular mindful observing daily activities as a continuation of practice after returning from a retreat and such allied regular habits.

These will heighten mindfulness to a great degree, which should be developed into a lifelong habit in Vipassana meditation. Such regular habits are excellent to develop.



Certain types of habit are crutches for those unconsciously seeking an excuse to enjoy sensual desires rather than to meditate. There are those who meditate according to a fixed time-table and at specific places only. Away from these conditions they just cannot meditate! The problem is that those who lean on these bad habits does not realise that they are doing it as an excuse. You will be hearing remarks such as: "I always meditate at 4am (or whatever time of the day) in the morning, the rest of the day I do not meditate. My best time is at that time".

There are also those who will say: "I have a quota for meditation; I meditate for x amount of hours a day and after that I have finished meditation for the day". The trouble with this is that the meditator is grooving into a rut which he believes is a good habit. He or she has found an excuse NOT to meditate at other times. The mind has been conditioned to meditate at a specific time and place only and other times are not suitable.

What a meditator should do is to meditate and contemplate when the urge to meditate arises, and that is at anytime and any place. This habit of meditating at any time is a good habit as the mind is geared to meditate anytime it sees the opportunity to do so. As we go on our daily activities, there are numerous occasions when we can practise mindfulness, after all Vipassana is about mindfulness. As we walk along the streets going to an appointment, we should be mindful of the steps; as left right, left right while concentrating on mentally observing the movements of each foot as we walk; our ears should be mindful of things we hear around us. We should note; hearing, hearing as we walk slowly and mindfully; sense of smell are another phenomenon that we should be mindful of as we walk along the streets.

As we eat, mindful eating and mindful awareness of phenomena arising from all other sense doors are some other forms of mindfulness exercises we can be engaged in on a daily basis. These exercises will enhance our concentration daily. These are good habits to inculcate.

Meditation is not only about sitting down with eyes closed; it is also about mindfully looking into the mind all the time if at all possible and if not at any time when you can remember; mindfully doing all your daily chores; mindfully attending to personal hygiene; practising mindfulness at every possible moment is meditation. Practising at certain fixed hour only is not meditation, as the rest of the time there is no developing of mindfulness. Mindful of daily activities is a good habit to inculcate as when you go for the next long retreat, your mind is already geared to be mindful.

The other danger is the tendency to attend retreats conducted by a certain teacher only, even though the meditator concerned has meditated with the same teacher for many years. A sign of progress in insight wisdom is the need to go solitary for long retreats on one's own time. When meditators undergo a ten-day retreat for many years with one teacher, he or she will not have progressed much. On the other end of the scale is the meditator who never stops going to retreats; everytime there is a retreat he will be there, regardless who the teacher is. This is the meditator who wants to be known as a meditator. He goes and asks question after question; at the next retreat he does the same thing.

During the days of the Blessed One, monks and lay people will arrive in the morning to see Him for meditation instructions and it was His habit to look into their minds and see at what stage the particular person was in his spiritual development, and then He would give specific instructions and send the meditators away to meditate. Meditators usually, monks, go away for a few days or even months and years. They would return to see the Blessed One only if they had some problems with their meditation and would seek further instructions. Over a period of time most of them will not return to see the Blessed One because they had attained to some achievements and thus did not need any further instructions. They were then on their own. When they have doubts or questions they would return to seek clarification from the Blessed One. Otherwise all meditators will proceed to meditate on their own time. Only when they had attained the supreme goal would they return and thank the Blessed One in gratitude.

The Blessed One advised “**....over there are the roots of trees, empty dwellings, practise meditation. Do not be heedless. Do not later fall into regret.**” Not a word was said about having regular time to meditate or to have a fixed time for meditation. Just meditate; there is no need for a teacher to be sitting down in front of you or you in front of the teacher. Seek clarification when you need them otherwise meditate. Do not be heedless; do not fall into regret later.

A SUITABLE PLACE

It is no small measure to say that your progress in your practice has a lot to do with a suitable environment to practise in. A cool, clean, healthy environment will be best as heat is most disturbing for the beginning practitioners. Some may say; “but then how will they know suffering if they are resorted in a cosy, comfortable environment”?

The answer is simple, if serious and sincere meditators have been given the correct tools for their practice, they will most assuredly attain to insights and with the acquisition of insights they will need no prompting to meditate, they will gyrate towards the correct situation that is necessary for further progress.

Just as in carefully nurturing a young infant before it is sent out to the world of sorrows, so is the same with new meditators. They will then have a better chance of survival. In due course they will be able to practise in all sorts of environment; in the middle of a highway is not an impossibility. The secret is proper guidance and practice in the initial stages.

As much as an infant needs tender loving care for healthy growth in its young days so too do new meditators need such tender loving care to nurture them for their future development and eventual acquisition of insights.

Further to a cool, healthy environment is the need for good nutritious food that is easily available. Others are pest free (human pest not excluded), low in noise pollution, good and easy transport system in place, and all facilities for social services such as medical care and such.

Jinavamsa April, 2011 Bukit Tinggi, Bentong, Pahang

BOOK I FUNDAMENTALS OF VIPASSANA AND THE PRACTICE

A Mahasi Discourse

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Calm and Insight	29
The Five Aggregates	29
Clinging arises through the Six Sense Doors	34
Mind and Matter are Impermanent	35
The Mind	39
Purpose of Meditation	40
Origination of Defilement	41
Note Diligently and Mindfully Right Now	42
Dedicated Effort	42
Contemplation in Impermanence	43
Reflection and Progress in the Practice	47
Gathering Wisdom Towards the Path	49
Recap of Basics	53
Fundamentals of the Practice	55
Advancement in the Practice	59
Wandering Mind	63
Mind Occurs Singly	63
Mind Stays in a Cave	64
Contemplation	71
Summary of Important and Essential Points	72

CALM AND INSIGHT

The Blessed One's Discourses and instructions in meditation are deep and profound; to the uninitiated it can even be construed as illogical. They are in fact exhaustive and detailed. Only the Blessed One, the Buddha is able to shed light on this subject. Essentially, there are two forms of meditation:

Meditation to develop calm and Meditation to develop insight.

MEDITATION TO DEVELOP CALM

On the first form, the Blessed One taught there are 40 objects, that when meditated on with correct view, will give rise to calm but not insight. All these 40 subjects of meditation are for developing concentration. Only respiration and analyses of elements have to do with insight. For insight we need to look further.

MEDITATION TO DEVELOP INSIGHT

The way to develop insight is to meditate and contemplate The Five Aggregates of Attachment or Grasping. (The term aggregate is taken as the sum or assemblage of many separate units, in this case the assemblage of five units. These five units are of a mental and physical nature). The mental and material qualities of human beings are aggregates of grasping (or attachment). They are grasped at with delight by craving in the sense objects'; or they may be grasped at through wrong views (through ignorance of the cause of those wrong views arising). When meditating and contemplating on them, we see them as they really are. If we do not see them as they really are, we will grasp at them and cling to them with craving based on misconceived views. Once we see them as they are, we no longer grasp or be attached to them. In this way insight will arise.

THE FIVE AGGREGATES

These Five Aggregates are; Matter, Feelings, Perception, Volitional Activities and Consciousness. They are the things that we are experiencing all the time; we do not have to seek them. They are around us and in us. ***When we see, they are there in the seeing; when we hear, they are there in the hearing; when we smell, taste, touch, or think, they are there in the smelling, tasting, touching or thinking; when we bend, stretch or move our limbs, the aggregates are there in the bending, stretching or moving.***

However, in our ignorance of reality, we do not know them for what they are. Not knowing them as they really are, we desire and grasp at them with craving and misconceived views. To illustrate:

In the act of bending, initially, there is the intention to bend. Then the different forms of bending appear in the mind. In the intention to bend there are the four mental aggregates. ***The mind that intends to bend is the Consciousness Aggregate (1)*** When we think of bending and then bend, we may have feelings of happiness, or unhappiness, or neither happiness nor unhappiness. If in bending we have happiness, there is pleasant feeling; if while bending we have unhappiness or anger, there is unpleasant feeling. If in bending there is neither happiness nor unhappiness, there is then a feeling of neutrality. ***So, when we have feelings about bending, there is the Feeling Aggregate (2)***. Then, there is perception, the aggregate that recognises the bending. ***This is the Perception Aggregate (3)***.

Then there is the mental state that urges us to bend. It seems as though it were saying, 'bend! bend!' ***This is the Volitional Aggregate (4)***. Therefore, in the intention to bend, ***all Four Mental Aggregates. Feelings, Perception, Volitional Activities and Consciousness,*** are manifested.

Secondly, the movement of the physical part bending is the form of the material matter; ***this is the Fifth Aggregate, the Material Aggregate.***

Therefore, in the Mental intention to bend and the Physical matter bending, there are these Five Aggregates. In reality, every Physical move, involves the Five Aggregates and are to be noted. A non Vipassana practitioner will wrongly view bending as: 'It is the 'I', the ego, who intends to bend. It is the 'I' that is bending. It is the 'I' who intends to move. It is the 'I' who moves.'

Further, a non meditator believes that there is an Independent Entity 'I' that have existed before, is now in existence, and will be in existence in the future; which is to say an 'I' that exist forever. This is the erroneous view of permanence. ***Few realise that there is only 'intention to bend' that exists in the moment.***

Generally, people have the view that; the mind have existed before, and the same 'I', that have existed before is now still in existence and is thinking of bending. They believe that: The 'I' exist now and will go on existing. After moving they further believe; "These **limbs**, this 'I' always exist." they do not see that the moment of this **limb**, this 'I' have passed away and the next moment of this **limb** and this 'I' have appeared and will in the same moment pass away too, so the **limb** and the 'I' are only momentarily. This, too, is the erroneous view of permanence. It is clinging to what is impermanent as permanent, clinging to what is non personality, non ego, as personality, as ego.

Tiredness and stiffness cause people to move and stretch their bodies and arms. They feel good after this; they believe that this is good and that all these are happiness to them. Dancers bend and stretch as they dance and think it is very nice to do so. They delight in it and are pleased with themselves. People discuss among themselves on pleasant subjects, they are pleased and they believe that this is happiness. They are successful, they believe that it is good; that it is happiness. Through delight and craving, people erroneously cling to things. What is impermanent is taken to be permanent and they find delight in these concepts.

What is not happiness, not personality, but just aggregates of mind and matter, is taken to be happiness, or personality, and delight therein.

These Five Aggregates together are misconceived as being a 'self', an 'ego' or 'I' and people cling to them. So, when bending, stretching or moving, the thinking 'I will bend' is aggregate of clinging. The bending is the aggregate of clinging. The thinking 'I will stretch' is the aggregate of clinging. The stretching is the aggregate of clinging. The thinking 'I will move' is the aggregate of clinging. The moving is the aggregate of clinging. Therefore, these are Aggregates of Clinging.

The same is true in seeing, hearing, etc. When we see, the seat of seeing; the eye is manifest; so is the object being seen, both are material things. They cannot cognise. Through Vipassana, one realises; if one fails to note while seeing, one tends to cling to what is seen and the consciousness of seeing. One thinks the whole body with the eye is permanent, happy, a self and clings to it. One thinks the whole material world with the object is permanent, beautiful, good, happy, and an independent self; they cling to it.

The form Eye and the form Visible Object, are the material aggregates of clinging. When you see, 'Seeing' Consciousness is manifest; it too involves four mental aggregates:

- The mere 'Awareness of Seeing' is the **Aggregate of Consciousness**.
- 'Pleasure or Displeasure' at Seeing is the **Aggregate of Feeling**.
- 'That which Perceives' the Object seen is the **Aggregate of Perception**.
- 'That which brings the Attention to 'See' is the **Aggregate of Volitional Activities**.

These constitute the Four Mental Aggregates.

If one fails to note while seeing, one is inclined to think that seeing 'has existed before, and exists now'. Or, as one sees good things, one may think 'seeing is good'; one then clings to this view. Thinking this way, one desires good things and enjoys pleasant sights. One goes to watch plays and films at the expense of money, sleep and health, because one thinks it is good to do so; one therefore clings to this view.

To think that, what we see or enjoy is 'I', 'I am enjoying', is to cling with craving and misconceived view. **Because they cling, the Mind and Matter that manifest in Seeing are said to be Aggregates of Clinging.** We cling in the same way in hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or thinking. We cling all the more to the mind that thinks, imagines and reflects as being the 'I', the ego. Therefore, the Five Aggregates of Clinging are the Mental-Material things that manifest themselves at the six sense doors; whenever one sees, smells, hears, feels, tastes or thinks. We meditate to realise these aggregates as they are. To meditate on them and see them in their reality, that is insight knowledge.

Insight meditation is meditating and contemplating on the Five Aggregates of Clinging. This is in accordance with the teachings of the Blessed One. The Blessed One taught: **"Material shape is impermanent. What is impermanent, that is suffering. What is suffering, that is not the self. What is not-self, that is not mine; that am I not, this is not myself. One should discern it by right wisdom."** – Samyutta ii 19

We are to be aware of and note arising mental and physical phenomena in our meditation; in so doing we will observe by direct experience the duality of mind and matter and this will enable us to realise the impermanent nature of such phenomena; that they are sources of suffering and are not “an independent inner self” or “an empowering ego within the living person”. We should meditate and note likewise on **Feelings, Perception, Mental Activities, and Consciousness**. Regarding these aggregates being **Impermanent, Suffering** and **Not-self**; the Blessed One taught:

Seeing all these things, the instructed disciple of the Noble Ones disregards material shape, disregards feeling. He who realises the impermanent, suffering, not-self nature of the Five Aggregates is unimpassioned of material form as he is of Feelings, Perception, Mental Activities and Consciousness; by being unimpassioned, he is passionless. As such, he has broken through to the Noble Path. He is on the Path of the Ariyas. Through passionlessness, he is Emancipated, Free. Once he has entered the Noble Path of passionlessness, he has arrived at the Four Fruitions of Freedom from defilement. In freedom the knowledge comes to be: ‘I am free from all defilement’.

When one is freed, one knows for oneself that one is so. In other words, when one has become an Arahant in whom the defilement are extinguished, one knows. By thoroughly attending to these Five Aggregates of Clinging the Fruits of Stream-winning will be realised. Therefore, to be a Stream-Winner and never to be reborn in the four lower states, one has to meditate on the Five Aggregates to realise their impermanence, suffering, and not-self nature. Further, it is the same Five Aggregates of Clinging that should be thoroughly attended to by a Stream-Winner, as impermanent, suffering and not-self. Developing from the stage of a Stream-Winner, a meditator moves on to Once-returning. The Once-Returner meditates on the same Five Aggregates of Clinging. He then becomes a Non-Returner. The Non-Returner meditates on the same Five Aggregates again. Now he becomes an Arahant (a Noble One). The Arahant too meditates on the Five Aggregates. From this it is clear that the Five Aggregates are the things one has to meditate on even when one has become an Arahant.

CLINGING ARISES THROUGH THE SIX SENSE-DOORS

Those who are not trained in Vipassana perceive themselves and others as having the nature of being permanent, as having existed before, as existing now, as going to exist in future, as existing always. They perceive themselves as endowed eternally with happiness, goodness and beauty. Further, they perceive that it is a 'self' within them that empowers seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or thinking. With constant and habitual thinking and imagining through many life times, human beings have been inculcated to conceive that the 'self' or 'I' have existed before and is constantly thinking and imagining. The 'self' or 'I' that had existed before is now continuing 'thinking' and 'imagining'. Hence, arises the conception that the 'I' or the 'self' is a permanent entity. They also conceive that 'thinking' or 'imagining' as being pleasant and enjoyable.

Therefore, when one believes that 'thinking' is happiness and when told that the 'thinking' will disappear, one does not accept this truth. One is not pleased; this is because one clings to the concept that 'thinking' is happiness and goodness. In this way one clings to whatever comes through the six-sense doors, as being 'permanent', as being 'happy', as an 'ego', as a 'self'. One delights with craving and clings to it. One is ignorant of the truth and clings to erroneous views.

To correct these views, when one meditates, one then contemplates on the Five Aggregates to realise their clinging or grasping nature; that these Aggregates are inconsistent, constantly operating in a flux; and because of this characteristic, such Aggregates are a source of unhappiness and unsatisfactoriness; and one then realises that there is not a so called "soul" or any empowering, individual entity within, that can discipline and orchestrate thoughts, speech and deeds. ***Clinging, grasping or attachments are the result of wrong views in regards to our concept of ourselves in relation to our way of life; they are the cause of our continual rebirths in the rounds of samsara.*** The only way out of this universal delusion is to practise Vipassana Mindfulness Meditation, and by such mindfulness meditation we are able to put an end to suffering and further rebirths in samsara. ***Without thorough insight knowledge we cling to things the moment we see them, hear them, smell them, taste them, feel them and think of them; hence, when we see someone, we believe that what we see is a person, an ego, we cling to this view*** (that is to say whenever we are aware of phenomena arising through our six sense doors).

We think of ourselves as well as of others as having an “empowering ego” within us that lives and controls all that we think, speak and perform. In reality, lives are not lived independently; life is only mind and matter rising conditionally one after another in an unending process, even through to existences after this.

Throughout many existences in samsara, living beings have mistakenly viewed mind and matter, as “an independent personage”, “an ego”, duly endowed with powers to think, speak and see for itself; and they, by age old habits and delusion, cling to this perception.

Vipassana, insight wisdom, allows us to see the reality of rising mental and physical phenomenon. Once we realise the reality of rising and falling mental and physical phenomena; that they are transient, a process in a flux of inconsistencies; a source of dissatisfaction and unhappiness; and arising through conditions, not governed by “ourselves”, we do not cling to them.

MIND AND MATTER ARE IMPERMANENT

Mind and Matter rise and pass away; in your meditation and contemplation you will see them as they really are; impermanent and a source of suffering, without any empowering self within. ***Mind and Matter, arising and passing away are but Processes lacking in a Personality, a Soul or a Self.***

In your meditation, you will observe by direct experience that there is “no personality”, “no soul”, and “no self”; just a process, arising and passing away. Hence, you experience things directly as they really are. When you see, hear, touch or perceive, you will see the Mental and Material Processes that rise through the six sense-doors as they really are. ***When you see, the seeing is real. Then you note ‘seeing; seeing’. In the same way, when you hear, note ‘hearing’; when you smell, note ‘smelling’; when you taste, note ‘tasting’; when you touch, note ‘touching’.*** Tiredness, body heat, aches and such unbearable and unpleasant sensations arise, from contact too. Note them; ‘tiredness, hot, pain’. As thoughts, ideas arise, note them; ‘thinking, imagining, pleasure, delight’, as they arise in your consciousness. Initially, the student should proceed with noting as well as he can, as he will find it difficult to be aware and note all that come up through the six sense-doors while his concentration is not well developed.

The practice in Vipassana meditation is to be aware, observe and note the rising and falling of the abdomen. Observing the movement of rising, you note; 'rising'; observing the movement of falling, you note 'falling'. **These movements are the real moments and we are observing and noting the rising and falling as it really happens; not before or after, but exactly at the moment it is real and happening. This is reality. The rising is real, the falling is real, and the moving air element is real.** In reality, the rising-falling characterises the air element. If you observe the abdomen attentively as it rises and falls, the firmness is there, the motion is there, and the bringing out is there. Here, the 'firmness' is the characteristic of the air element, the motion is its property, and the bringing out is its manifestation. To know the air element as it really is means to know its characteristic, property and manifestation. **Vipassana meditation allows us to realise the reality of the aggregates, giving rise to insight knowledge, which begins with the defining of mind and matter.** One has to understand the air element by way of its characteristics, the function and manifestation. The air element has the characteristic of support. In a football it is air that fills and supports, so that the ball expands and remains firm as the air element is in support.

The Blessed One taught that one should be mindful of the form walking by noting 'walking, walking', every time one walks. How knowledge is developed from meditating is explained. **When he walks, he is aware; 'I am walking'; the thought I am walking arises. This produces air. The air triggers the movements. The bringing forward of the whole body as the air element spreads is said to be walking.** The meditator who is practising walking meditating, notes thus; 'walking, walking', every time he walks. Firstly, the intention 'I will walk' arises. This intention gives rise to tense movement all over the body, which in turn causes the material body to move forward movement by movement. Generally, it is said: 'I walk' or 'He walks' In reality there is no "I" or "He" that walks. The meditator realises that there is only the Intention to walk and the Material Form moves in walking.

When one stretches one's arm, one feels stiffness being initiated there. It is the air element in support. In the same way when one presses an air-pillow or mattress with one's body or head, one's body or head will not come down but stay high above. It is because the air element in the pillow is providing the support. Bricks pile up as the ones below support those above.

If the bricks below are not supporting, the ones above will tumble down. In the same way the human body is maintained in its firm condition; standing, walking or sitting by the air element. The function of the air element is moving. It moves from place to place when it is strong. It is the air element that makes the body bend, stretch, sit, rise, go or come.

It may be construed that when one notes 'bending, stretching', as the case may be only concepts like arms will appear in the mind. Further when one notes 'left, right' as one walks, only concepts like legs will appear in the mind, and if one notes 'rising, falling', only concepts like the abdomen will appear in the mind. **Concepts and realities will arise simultaneously at the early stages. Therefore, both, concepts and realities will appear to the beginner in the initial phase of practice.** It will be difficult and impracticable to separate them at the beginning of the training. However, as the student advances in his insight realisation, concepts and realities will be strictly defined and concepts will not arise.

The Blessed One himself did not solely apply realities in His Teachings when He taught 'I am walking, etc.,' when we walk, bend or stretch, He made use of conventional concepts as He realises that there will be those who cannot see realities as such and not seeing it as such, they will be confused. **Although one meditates applying the language of concepts like 'walking, bending, stretching'; as one's mindfulness and concentration become stronger, All Concepts will disappear and only the Realities like Support and Movements will appear to the meditator.**

When one attains to the stage of the **Knowledge of Dissolution** (refer to Book V), and although one notes, 'walking, walking', based on conventional language, neither the legs nor the body will appear in the mind; only the movements are there. Although noting 'bending, bending', there will not be forms of arms or legs; only the movements. Although noting, 'rising, falling', there will not be images of the abdomen or the body; only the movements out and in. These as well as swaying are functions of the air element.

What appears to be bringing out or drawing in to the meditator's mind is the manifestation of the air element. When bending or stretching the arm, it appears something is drawing it in or pushing it out. It is plainer when walking.

To the meditator whose concentration has grown sharper by noting 'walking, right step, left step, lifting, putting forward, putting down', this moving forward as if being driven from behind becomes quite plain. The legs seem to be pushing forward of their own accord. How they move forward without the meditator making any effort is very plain. So, when one meditates, one will know the air element by way of its characteristic of supporting, its function of moving, and its manifestation of bringing out; this is right knowledge. Even so, this knowledge of the characteristics is not a prerequisite to begin practising meditation; one need not learn them as this insight will arise in the course of the practice.

When one sees a flash of lightning, this bright flash is the characteristic of lightning. As lightning flashes, darkness is dispelled; this is the function of lightning, its work. One also sees what it is like; whether it is long, short, a curve, a circle, straight, or vast. One sees its characteristic, its function, and its manifestation, all at once. Only thing is one may not be able to say the brightness is its characteristic, dispelling of darkness is its function, or its shape or outline is its manifestation; however, one sees them all the same.

In like manner, one will know about the air element; one need not learn about them, as what we learn are not realities, they are only concepts, from hearsay and literature. The meditator who is contemplating the rising mind and matter knows them as if he were touching them. He knows the firmness or laxity thereof; its characteristic. He knows the moving in or out; its function. He also knows its bringing in and pushing out; its manifestation. These are the reality he knows directly.

When one meditates; 'right step, left step', one knows the tenseness in every step; its characteristic. One knows the moving about; its function. One knows its bringing out; its manifestation. These are proper knowledge; the right knowledge. To know for oneself how one can discern the characteristic and so on by meditating on what arises, one must practise as follows:

When one sits down and meditates, one will certainly have some bodily heat, pain, tiredness or ache, somewhere in the body; these are unpleasant feelings. When one mindfully notes; 'hot, hot', or 'pain, pain'; one will realise that one is going through an unpleasant experience and suffering. This is the characteristic of suffering; going through an unpleasant experience.

When one is very tired, one may not be able to move. This depressing of the mind is the function of unpleasant feeling. When the mind is depressed, its concomitants are also depressed and in low spirits (Concomitants are the qualities associated with the arising of consciousness in the mind; mind only knows the object, it therefore needs accompanying descriptive factors to qualify the character of the mind in its arising). The manifestation of unpleasant feeling is physical distress. It manifests itself as a physical affliction, an unbearable discomfort, to the meditator's mind. As he meditates and notes; 'hot, hot, pain, pain'; it appears to him as something oppressing in the body, something very hard to bear. It shows up so much that he may even groan. If one meditates and note on the unpleasant feeling in the body as it rises, one knows; the undergoing of undesirable tangible object; its characteristic; the waning of associated states; its function, and the physical affliction; its manifestation. This is the way Vipassana meditators acquire insight knowledge.

THE MIND

Mind has the intrinsic nature of going to the object, cognising the object. This is the characteristic of mind; the ability to cognise. Mind cognises, imagines and thinks; note 'thinking, imagining, pondering', as and when such phenomena arise. If an idea comes up while you are meditating 'rising, falling', etc., you have to note the idea. If you can note it the moment it appears, it disappears immediately. If you can't, several of its followers (concomitants) like delight, desire, will come in succession. If you note consciousness whenever it rises, you see very clearly how it is going to this object, now going to that object. As you note rising, falling, etc., the mind sometimes wanders away. You note it and it disappears. Then another consciousness comes up. You note it and it disappears. Again another consciousness appears. Again you note it and again it disappears. Again another comes up. You have to note these rising and falling phenomena. Then the meditator comes to realise that 'Consciousness is a succession of events that rises and falls away, one after another. When one disappears, another appears'. The continuous manifestation of consciousness is realised. The meditator who realises this also realises death and birth: ***"Death is similar to the passing away of the consciousness just noted, and it is inevitable that the following process in the same stream is birth. Death and birth is but a process that is ongoing. One can then understand the characteristic, function and manifestation of things even though one has not learnt about them; one needs only to meditate and contemplate on them, as they arise"***.

The same is true of all the other mental and material qualities. The beginner in meditation can meditate on and understand the mental-material aggregate of clinging only by way of these characteristics, function and manifestation. At the initial stage with the **Analytical Knowledge of Mind and Matter** and the **Knowledge by Discerning Conditionality**, which are elemental in insight meditation; understanding that much is enough (see Book V).

PURPOSE OF MEDITATION

Vipassana is to do away with clinging, attachment and grasping. It is to eradicate defilement from the mind. People not practised in Vipassana tend to view the arising phenomenon of mind and matter, as joyful and as something belonging to an 'I', that exert control over their thoughts, speech and deeds; and they are pleased with them. It is a way to rid ourselves from these clings; to be free from them. This is the one and only goal of insight meditation. Vipassana insight meditation is a twin pronged practice; practical and inferential. The knowledge you gain by meditating on what actually arises by way of characteristics, function and manifestation is practical insight. From this practical knowledge you infer the impermanence, suffering and non-self nature of things past and future, things you have not experienced. This is inferential insight. 'The object seen' is practical insight; 'going after the object seen, determining both; in the past, in the future', is inferential insight. Note that inferential insight can only be possible following on from experiential practice, no inference can be made without first realising the present. Hence: "Seeing the impermanence of even one formation, one draws the conclusion as regards the others, as 'impermanent are all the things of life'."

Phenomena past or future are not dependable as meditation objects as contemplating on them do not give rise to understanding their real nature. Not understanding them, we will not be able to know things as they really are. Things of the more recent past may be recalled; and, as we recall them, we think, 'I' saw, 'I' heard, 'I' thought. It was 'I' (an entity) who saw at that time and it is still the same 'I' (same entity) who, is seeing now." Hence, there is the 'I' concept for us. There can even be concepts of permanence and happiness. As such, recalling things in the past to meditate on do not serve our purpose. We will cling to them and this clinging is difficult to overcome. Although we look on them as mind and matter with all our learning and thinking, the 'I' concept persists, because we have clinging attachment to them.

We say 'impermanent' on the one hand, but we conceptualise 'permanency' on the other. We note suffering, but the notion 'happiness' keeps turning up. We meditate on 'non-self', but the 'self' image remains strong and firm. Our meditation may give way to preconceived ideas. Things of indefinite time are illusionary and are not in existent; they are basically imaginations, thoughts and delusions; concepts of names, signs and shapes.

ORIGINATION OF DEFILEMENT

Presently arising phenomena from the six sense doors are the realities of our present moment; they are real and in their initial moment of arising they have not defiled the mind as yet. They are presently arising; as they arise in the present moment, they are like brand new, unsoiled cloth or paper.

Being not mindful, one fails to note arising phenomena, clinging arises; one's mind is defiled; this defiling process is irreversible. When one is mindful and diligent to note arising phenomena, clinging does not occur; one's mind will not be defiled. This is the reason why mindfulness is of great importance. There is clinging with craving; clinging of sense-desires; there is clinging with wrong view; clinging of wrong views, of mere rite and ritual; of the self. Hence: ***“Conditioned by clinging is becoming; conditioned by becoming is birth; conditioned by birth, old age and dying; grief, suffering, sorrow, despair and lamentation come into being. Thus, comes to be the origination of this entire mass of ill.”***

Clinging, grasping and or attachment is no small matter. It is the root-cause of all deeds, good or bad. One who clings to or who has grasped at mental or physical phenomena, works to accomplish what he believes are good things. All living things do what they do because they think it is good and beneficial for him do so. When one thinks something is good, one becomes attached to it, and one tends to cling to it, regardless of the correctness or otherwise of that attachment. A thief steals, a robber robs people because they think it is beneficial to them to steal and rob. So does a killer kills, because he thinks it is beneficial to him to kill.

NOTE DILIGENTLY AND MINDFULLY RIGHT NOW

If we fail to diligently and mindfully note rising phenomena, we will not be able to know their real nature of impermanence, suffering and not-self; in which circumstance, there are good possibilities that we may relive them, which will cause defilement to arise in us. **Defilement are latent in whatever we see, hear, taste, smell, feel and think.** When you diligently and mindfully note arising phenomenon during meditation, you will realise that when you note what you see, it passes away; what you hear and you note; it passes away. They pass away in no time at all. Now that you see them as they really are, there is nothing to love, nothing to hate, nothing to cling to. If there is nothing to cling to, there can be no clinging, attachment or grasping. **Only when you are aware of and note arising phenomena, clinging and grasping will not arise. When you note as soon as the eye-door process ends and before the subsequent mind-door process begins clinging will not arise.** When diligently and mindfully noting 'seeing', 'hearing', 'touching' or 'perceiving', arising consciousness will not bring about clinging. **The meditator who notes on whatever arises as it arises sees directly how everything arises and passes away, and it becomes clear to him that all things are Impermanent, Suffering is in their nature and there is no powerful, Controlling Entity within a living being; all things are without a Self. He knows this for himself; not because a teacher has explained it to him. This only is the real knowledge.**

DEDICATED EFFORT

To arrive at the above stage of knowledge needs dedicated effort and firm faith (two of the five factors to be developed), without laxity of purpose. However, there is no surety that the meditator will succeed at one sitting. In any case he must diligently and mindfully note all phenomena arising from the six sense doors, even though it may not be possible to note everything initially. He should begin noting several or as much as he can. It is easy to observe the moving form in the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note without a let-up; 'rising, falling; rising, falling'. To enhance mindfulness and concentration in the early stage, sitting and touching points should also be noted; 'rising, falling, sitting, touching'; as noting continues, ideas may come up; note them too; 'thinking, planning, knowing'. These are hindrances, and unless they are gotten rid of, they will cloud your realisation of mind and matter phenomena. **Do not dwell on them. Note them and observe their disappearance.**

If unbearable feelings like tiredness, body temperature, pain, or itch, appear in the body, be aware of their arising and note: 'tired, tired' or 'hot, hot', as they arise. If desire arises to stretch or bend the limbs, note it too, 'desire to bend, desire to stretch'. When you bend or stretch, every move should be noted: 'bending, stretching; bending, stretching'. In the same way, when you rise from your sitting posture, note every move. When you walk, note every step. When you sit down, note it. If you lie down, note it too. **Every physical movement made, every thought that arises, every feeling that comes up; all must be diligently and mindfully noted.** In all cases, as in during a period of mental quietness, if there is nothing in particular to note, revert to noting 'rising, falling, sitting, touching'. If there are things you see or hear particularly, note them too. Except for the four, five, or six hours you sleep, you keep noting things. If you keep on noting in earnest, you will, in two or three days, find your mindfulness and concentration quite strong; if not in two or three days, then in five or six days. Then very rarely do wandering thoughts come up. If they do, you are able to note them the moment they come. And they pass away the moment you note them. The object noted like the rising and falling and the mind noting it seem to be well-timed, and your noting is generally easy and sharp. These are signs that your mindfulness and concentration have become strong; that you have developed purity of mind.

CONTEMPLATION ON IMPERMANENCE

By diligent and correct practice, the meditator will gain a deeper and more profound Vipassana knowledge; a clear purified mind will be the immediate result. At this advanced stage the meditator will realise distinctly and clearly without doubt that every time he notes, the object noted and the mind that notes it are two separate phenomena. **He comes to know that Material Form is One and The Mental State that notes it, is Another.** To the non-Vipassana person, the Material Form and the Mind that cognises are one and the same thing; however, the Vipassana meditator, whose mindfulness and concentration are well developed; realises that the object of attention and the awareness of it are as separate as the wall and the stone that is thrown at it. When he notes 'rising', he realises that 'rising' is one thing, the awareness of it is another thing; only these two exist. When he notes 'falling', 'falling' is one, 'awareness' is another; only these two. The knowledge comes clear to him of its own accord. When he lifts one foot in walking; lifting is one, awareness is another; only these two exist. When he pushes the leg forward; the pushing and the awareness, only these two exist.

Through inference of this direct knowledge, all other things too are impermanent in that **they disappear after becoming**. It must be clear that this knowledge comes to a meditator not through books or from teachers; but that he knows this knowledge by his own contemplation. This is real knowledge. To believe what other people say is faith. To remember out of faith is learning. Insight knowledge comes from one's own personal experience.

That the Five Aggregates are impermanent must be realised by oneself. Realising this, one would further come to know that the Five Aggregates are of a suffering nature, all are conditional and all do not possess an individual self. On continuing practice and further contemplation on mind and matter, the initial stages of insight; **Analytical Knowledge of Mind and Matter** and the **Knowledge of Discerning Conditionality** will mature and be realised by the meditator. **He realises Mind and Matter are Impermanent because they come to be and then pass away. If a thing never comes to be, it cannot be said to be impermanent.**

Concepts never come to be, never really exist. Take a personal name. It comes into use from the day a child is named. It appears as though it has come to be. It has never come to be, it never really exists. Concepts, names, are just conventions. They never exist. They have never been and they will never be. They never arise, so we can't say they 'pass away'. Nor can we say they are impermanent. Every concept is like that; not in existence, not becoming, not passing away; thus, not impermanent. Mind and matter never were in the beginning. They come into being whenever there arise causes (birth is the cause of mind and matter arising). After coming into being they pass away. The realities of mind and matter are impermanent (death is the ending of mind and matter).

As in the case of seeing; in the beginning there is no seeing, however if the eye is good, an object comes up and there is light, your attention will be drawn to it. Therefore, when these four causes coincide, there is seeing. Once seeing has arisen, it passes away. No more of it. So seeing is impermanent. It is not very easy for a non-Vipassana practitioner to know that seeing is impermanent. Hearing is easier to understand. Initially, hearing is not in existence; however, the ear being efficient and the source of sound arises and there is no barrier, attention will be drawn to the sound; when these four factors coincide, then there is hearing. It arises and passes away; no more of it, hence hearing is impermanent.

You hear talking; you hear one sound after another. Once you have heard them, they are gone. When something is said; you hear it, then it is no more. They arise and they pass away. It is the same with other psycho-physical phenomena; they come and they go. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking, bending, stretching, moving; all come and pass away. Because they keep passing away, we say they are impermanent. Of these, the passing away of consciousness is very clear. If your mind wanders while you are noting 'rising, falling'; you note 'wandering'. As it is being noted, the wandering mind is no more. It has not existed before. It comes about just then. It is gone when noted. Hence it is impermanent. The passing away of unpleasant feelings, too, is obvious. As you go on noting 'rising, falling, tiredness, hot, or pain', sometimes it disappears at least for the time you are noting. So it is impermanent. The meditator realises its impermanent characteristic as he notes its arising and passing away. ***This realisation of the fleeting nature of things is contemplation of impermanence. It comes from your own experience. Mere reflection without personal experience is not true knowledge.***

Without meditating and noting arising phenomena, you will not know directly what come up and pass away. If you had learnt it from books, it is just book knowledge, but not intrinsic insight knowledge known by your own direct experience. Intrinsic insight knowledge is what you know for yourself by meditating and contemplating on things as they arise and pass away. ***As your concentration sharpens, you will be able to see a great number of thoughts in one single act of bending or stretching of the limbs. You will observe large numbers of thoughts coming up one after another as you intend to bend and stretch or perform other physical functions.*** There will arise a great number of thoughts in the twinkling of an eye. Great numbers of thoughts will also arise when you walk. You have to note all these fleeting thoughts as they arise. If you cannot label them, just note 'aware, aware'. You will see that there are four, five, or ten thoughts arising in succession every time you note 'aware'. Sometimes when the awareness is so swift, even the word 'aware' is no longer necessary; just observe their passing away. ***A thought arises, the mind is aware of it; another thought arises, the observant consciousness is aware of it.***

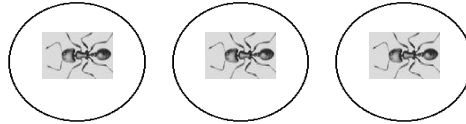
For every thought that arises there is the observing and diligent mind that is aware of it. Being mindful, arising and passing away of phenomena are very clear to the meditator. The wandering mind that arises as you are noting the rising and falling of the abdomen is caught by the observing consciousness as quickly and as sharply as a well aimed arrow that flies directly into the target. When you are aware of it, it is gone. You observed it as clearly as if you were holding it in the palm of your hands.

When tiredness arises, you note 'tired', and it is gone. It comes up again, you note it again, and it is gone again. This kind of passing away will be made all the more clearer in advanced insight. 'Tired', noted, gone; 'tired', noted, gone; they pass away one by one. There is no connection between one tiredness and the next. Similarly with pain; 'pain', noted, gone; 'pain', noted, gone; each pain is gone at each noting. One pain does not mix with the other. Each pain is distinctly separate from the other. To ordinary people there is no interruption in tiredness or pain. It seems to tire or pain continuously for a long time. In fact, tiredness or pain is not continuous. One unit of tiredness and the next, one unit of pain and the next, just very short, very separate units of tiredness or pain. The meditator sees this as he notes.

When 'rising' of the abdomen is noted, the rising comes up gradually and passes away by degrees. When 'falling' of the abdomen is noted, the falling comes up and passes away by degrees. Generally, people perceive the rising and falling in terms of the abdominal shape. So perceiving, they will only be seeing the abdominal shape. Therefore, they only perceive the material element moving; they do not understand as taught by the Blessed One that realities like mind and matter do not move from place to place. In another example, whenever the hand moves, they think it is the same hand that moves, they think the same hand moves inwards and outwards. To them it is an ever-unchanging hand. ***It is because they fail to see through to the reality of arising and breaking up of matter, the way matter rises and disappears in succession.*** It is because they lack the knowledge to see through to the reality that the fact of **impermanence is hidden by continuity**. It is hidden because one does not note on what arises and passes away. Since the meditator is watching every arising, all things mental and material appear to him as separate, broken pieces; not as things whole and unbroken.

From afar ants look like a line, but nearer you see the ants one by one.*****

(normal view of arising phenomena)



(a Vipassana practitioner view of arising phenomena)

The Vipassana practitioner sees things in broken pieces (or in separate individual frame) so continuity cannot hide the fact from him. The characteristic of impermanence unfolds itself to him. He is no longer deluded. ***When it is realised through experience that life is but made up of things that rise and pass away incessantly, there will not be any inclination to clinging to a self.*** When impermanence is realised, suffering is too. The meditator who realises how things are rising and passing away, can also see how the two events, rising and passing away, have been the source of dissatisfaction. When the characteristic of impermanence is seen, the characteristic of suffering is seen too. Hence, it is imperative to contemplate and realise the one characteristic of impermanence.

REFLECTIONS AND PROGRESS IN THE PRACTICE

When Insight Knowledge has advanced, you will be able to see things in their true light; that all things are of an Impermanent, Suffering and Non-self nature; this knowledge can only be achieved through Vipassana. When you realise these Three Universal Characteristics of existence, you will understand their true nature.

All forms of phenomena including mind and matter, appear and disappear; you can derive no pleasure from them; they can never be a refuge; they can perish at any moment; they are frightening and they are a source of suffering. Almost all people will have the belief that: "This body will not perish so soon. It will last for quite a long time." So they take the body to be a dependable refuge; but now as those who meditate note they find only incessant rising and passing away. They see that all things, physical and mental, passing away as they note them.

If no new ones arise for the mental and material things that have passed away, death ensues; and frighteningly, the truth strikes home that this can happen at any moment without notice or by your leave! To believe that there is an individual 'self' in these mental and material things which are also subject to death at any moment and to take refuge in such a 'self' is as deluded as taking refuge in an old tumble-down house. Further, they realise that nothing happens as they desire. Things just follow their natural course. They thought they could move if they wished to, sit if they wished to, rise, see, hear or do anything if they wished to. Now as they meditate and note, they realise that what they have been taught, believed in and taken for granted as the realities of their existence all their lives was in fact a great delusion founded on totally unsound reasoning.

They now realise that Mind and Matter work as a pair; only when there is intention to bend is there the material form bending! Only when there is intention to stretch is there the material form stretching. There is effect only when there is cause. Only when there is something to see do they see. If there is something to see, they can't help seeing it. They hear when there is something to hear. They feel happy only when there is reason to be happy. They worry when there is cause to worry. If there is cause, there is effect. They cannot help it. There is no entity that lives and does what it desires. There is no self, no ego, no I. Only processes of arising and passing away. To Have Clear Understanding Is The Most Important Thing In Insight Meditation.

Meditators will experience joys, tranquilities, and bright lights in the course of their practice; these are not important things. ***What is important is to have direct realisation of impermanence, suffering and not-self. These characteristics are clear to meditators as meditation progresses.***

When meditators' practice has evolved to deeper stages of insight wisdom, they will have no obsession with the object noted; when this happens, clinging does not arise. In their noting of arising phenomena from the six sense doors, there is no clinging to what they see, hear, smell, eat, touch or be aware of. These phenomena appear to rise each in its time and then pass away.

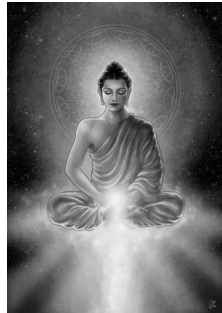
Meditators will have realised that all rising mental and physical phenomena are impermanent; therefore, there is nothing to cling to. They will also realise that all arising mental and physical phenomena cause suffering with their rise and fall. There is nothing to cling to as happy, good, or beautiful. They rise and fall as is their nature, so there is nothing to cling to as self, soul, or that the "I" have lived and lasted. All these knowledge will be gradually realised by meditators directly. ***"The stopping of clinging is from the stopping of craving; the stopping of becoming is from the stopping of clinging; the stopping of birth is from the stopping of becoming; from the stopping of birth, old age and dying; grief, suffering, sorrow, despair, and lamentation are stopped. Thus comes to be the stopping of this entire mass of ill."***

— M. i. 337; S. ii. 1-3

One who notes on the mental and material objects that appear at the six sense-doors and knows their intrinsic nature of impermanence, suffering and not-self does not delight in them or cling to them. ***As he does not cling to them, he makes no effort to enjoy them; as he does not make an effort, there arises no kamma; as no kamma arises, there is no new birth. When there is no new birth, there is no occasion for old age, dying, grief, etc. This is how one realises momentary Nibbana through insight path whenever one notes.***

GATHERING WISDOM TOWARDS THE PATH

To reach the Noble Path the meditator has to practise diligently to realise Insight Path as an initial prerequisite; and Insight Path begins with attaining to the Analytical Knowledge of Mind and Matter. From there, he continues with the practice till he arrives at the Knowledge by Discerning Conditionality. Then, noting diligently, he gains the Knowledge of Investigation. Here he comes to enjoy reflecting on things, investigating them, often spending some time in doing so. If he is not reflecting or contemplating, he should continue meditating.



His awareness now becomes light and swift. He will see very clearly how the things noted arise and pass away. At this juncture, he will have come to the **Knowledge of Rising and Passing Away.**

At this stage noting tends to be easy. Illuminations, joys, tranquilities appear. Going through experiences not even thought of before, he is thrilled with joy and happiness. At this preliminary stage of insight wisdom, the meditator has to take great pains not to let the mind wander this way and that; as, should it do so, he will not be able to note arising phenomena well. At this stage, nothing seems right; more energetic efforts are needed to overcome hindrances. But with strong faith in his teachers, good intentions and determination, he will pass through all these difficult stages. He would have attained to the **Knowledge of Rising and Passing Away**.

Passing through this stage, everything is fine. Now, noting is easy and effortless. It is good to note, and brilliant lights appear. Rapture seizes him and causes ripples of joy in him. Both body and mind are at ease and he feels very comfortable. The objects to be noted seem to drop onto his mindfulness of their own accord. Mindfulness on its part seems to drop on the object of its own accord. Everything there is noted with ease. One never fails or forgets to note. On every noting the awareness of what is noted is very clear. If he attends to something and reflects on it, it proves to be a plain and simple matter. If he contemplates on impermanence, suffering and not-self, they turn out to be plainly discernible things. The meditator then feels like spreading the Dhamma and believes he would make a very good teacher. He wants to teach and he tends to be vocal.



Practising meditation is in a way similar to climbing a mountain. The meditator begins climbing from the base, and soon he gets tired. He enquires of those who are coming down and they answer with encouraging words like, "It's nearer now." Tired, he climbs on and very soon comes to a resting place in the shade of a tree with a cool breeze blowing

in. All his tiredness is gone. The beautiful scenery around fascinates him. He is refreshed to climb on. In this analogy, the **Knowledge of Rising and Passing Away** is the resting place for his climb to higher insight knowledge. He continues meditating and noting. Then, as he progresses, material forms and features no longer manifest themselves and he finds them always disappearing.

Whatever appears; disappears the moment he notes it. He notes seeing, it disappears swiftly; he notes hearing, it disappears; bending, stretching, again they disappear swiftly. Not only do the object that comes up disappears, the awareness of it too disappears with it in a pair-wise sequence. This is attaining to the **Knowledge of Dissolution**.

Every time he notes arising phenomena, they dissolve swiftly. Having witnessed this for a long time, he develops fear of them. This is the **Knowledge of Fearfulness**. Then he finds fault with these things that keep passing away. He is at the stage of **Knowledge of Tribulation**. Then as he notes on, he becomes wearied of them. This is the **Knowledge of Repulsion**.

Sitting or standing, going or coming, bending or stretching, speaking or working; everything had seemed very nice. The meditator had always believed that his material body is dependable and a delightful thing. Now, he realises that Mind and Matter has the tendency to rise and fall away and be terminated at any moment; he therefore, no longer sees the body as dependable or delightful; he sees it as something undesirable and repugnant. He has enjoyed pleasurable feelings of materiality and mentality; "I am enjoying, I feel happy." Now these feelings are no longer pleasurable; they pass away as he notes them. He becomes wearied of them.

The meditator had thought well of his perception of materiality and mentality, but now this perception too passes away as he notes them. He feels disgusted with it as well. Volitional activities are responsible for all his physical, mental and vocal behaviour. To think; "I sit, I rise, I go, I act", is to cling to volitional activities. He have thought well of them, too, now that he sees them passing away, he feels repulsion towards them. In the matter of the sense organs too; whatever phenomenon that arises at the six sense doors is now a thing of disgust, to be wearied of. He has a sense of disgust in their arising and passing away; extreme disgust in their instability and inconsistency. Then arise the desire to be rid of them: "They come and pass away incessantly; they are worthless; they should all ceased." With this insight, the meditator has arrived at the **Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance**. **His thoughts now turn to Nibbana; he reviews and reflects on his present faculties and assesses their maturity. He reviews each faculty; Faith, Exertion, Mindfulness, Concentration and Insight Wisdom. He seeks to develop their balance and enhance their development.**

With confidence in his well developed faculties, he then aspires to practise with increased vigour and diligence. He continues with his meditation with improved mindfulness and diligence. This is the **Knowledge of Reflection**. Working with such increased effort; his realisation of the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self becomes all the more profound and all encompassing to his mind. Especially pervasive is the realisation of suffering. After the stage of reflection he comes to the **Knowledge of Indifference to Material Formations**. *Now the meditator is quite at ease. Without much effort on his part, notings run smoothly. He sits down to note and makes the initial effort. Then everything runs its course, smooth like clock-work. For an hour or so he makes no change in his posture and goes on with meditation and contemplation without interruption. Before this knowledge there may have been disturbances; his mind may be directed to a sound heard and which had hindered him; thoughts may have wandered. Painful feelings like tiredness, bodily heat, aches, itches, coughs, appear and obstructed his practice; he has to begin all over. But now all goes well. There are no more disturbances. Sounds are heard and noted and whatever arises from the six sense doors are noted without much effort.*

There are no more wanderings of the mind. Pleasant objects may turn up but no delight or pleasure arises in the meditator. He may be faced with unpleasant objects; he feels neither displeasure nor fear. Painful feelings like tiredness, bodily heat or aches rarely appear. If they do, they are not unbearable. The meditator's noting improves further and becomes easier. Itching, pains and coughs disappear once this stage of knowledge is attained. Some are even cured of serious illnesses. Even if the illnesses are not completely cured, meditator gets some relief while noting in earnest. Even for an hour or for longer periods there will be no interruption to his noting; he feels no weariness in the body.

Time passes unheeded. He has no intention to stop meditating and noting and while others are finding difficulties under challenging conditions, such as extreme heat; the meditator who is working in earnest with this Knowledge of Indifference to Material Formations will not be hindered by the conditions at all. The whole day seems to have passed by.

However, in this advanced contemplation, and while at this stage of further insight knowledge materialising, there can be dangers like excess of worry, ambition, or attachment. A meditator has to be aware and note them; when these are noted and gotten rid of, further progress will be made and the Noble Path Knowledge will be realised. Whenever one notes; there will not be any accumulation of further defilement, hence, no suffering or unwholesome kamma will arise in respect of the objects noted. All are extinguished. Such cessation of suffering is experienced with every act of noting. Noting is the way to the truth of cessation. At the Noble Path moment you realise the First Stage to Nibbana. Every time you note, right view regarding the true nature of mind and matter arises. Once there is right view its concomitants such as right thought arise too. To practise and realise the Eight Constituents of the Path is to develop the Path. It is how you understand while meditating. At the Noble Path moment the Eight Constituents arise and Nibbana is realised. The one who has arrived at the Path and Fruition can see on reflection how the Noble Path has come to be. Hence, if you understand how mind and matter are cause for sufferings, if you have given up craving which is also the cause of suffering, if you realise the end of suffering, and if you realise the Eight Constituents of the Path in you; you realise the Four Noble Truths. Once you know the Four Noble Truths you know the Noble Dhamma as well.

RECAP OF BASICS

The meditator must be mindful that when he walks, he notes; 'intention to walk'; 'walking, walking', 'lifting, pushing forward, putting down'. As he so walks, mindfulness arises whenever he notes, as does knowledge that cognises the object noted. He knows the intention to walk, the material form of walking, and the awareness of walking arises and pass away. This mindfulness and knowledge that arise whenever he notes constitute Establishing Mindfulness by way of **Contemplation of the Body**.

He is aware: 'I am feeling a painful feeling'. The meditator notes 'hot, hot' or 'pain, pain', whenever there arise bodily heat or pain. He is mindful and he knows how feelings arise and then pass away. This is Establishing Mindfulness by way of **Contemplation of Feelings**.

He is aware of a passionate mind that it is passionate. Every time a thought or idea arises, the meditator notes; 'clinging, delighting'. He is thus mindful and knows how they arise and pass away. This is Establishing Mindfulness by way of **Contemplation of the Mind**.

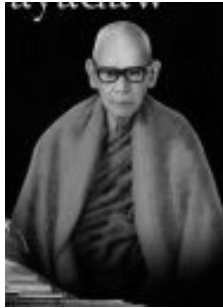
One who has sensual desire is aware: 'There is sensual desire in me'. The meditator notes; 'desire, delight', and so on, and is mindful and knows how dispositions like sensual desire arise and pass away. This is Establishing Mindfulness by way of **Contemplation of Mental Factors**.

The meditator realises from self-experience. He becomes skillful in the Noble Dhamma, the **Four Establishments of Mindfulness**. At the same time he is making the **Four Supreme Efforts**, too. *As he notes, he is making effort to discard evils that have arisen, or to prevent the arising of those evils not yet arisen, or to develop those good deeds of insight and Path that have not yet arisen, or to augment the insight knowledge that has already arisen.* The **Four Means of Accomplishment** are involved too. When he notes, he relies on determination, effort, thought or reason.

The **Five Faculties of Confidence, Effort, Mindfulness, Concentration and Wisdom** are there, too. The Five Powers are the same as the Five Faculties. The **Seven Factors of Enlightenment**, too, are there.

When he notes, he develops **Mindfulness, Investigation** (of The Dhamma), **Effort, Rapture, Quietude, Concentration and Equanimity**. The **Eightfold Path** is involved too. Every time he notes he is walking along this Path. As a traveller nears his destination with each step, he too nears Nibbana with each noting. If the Path-Fruition were to be reached in ten thousand notings, and if he now has a thousand notings, then he would need nine thousand more notings to reach it. If he had made nine thousand notings already then he would need only a thousand more. If he had 9999 already, then the very next noting would be the Path process. The more he notes, the nearer he comes to the Path.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE PRACTICE



The Blessed One taught: A human being, a person is a conditionally coming together of two Distinct Groups; Mind and Matter. In the practice of Vipassana, we see the reality that the solid substance of a human being is a mass of matter, just like a doll made of clay which is a collection of clay dust.

MATTER (rupa) has an inherent capability of changing its form under physical conditions of heat and cold; it does not possess any faculty of knowing an object.

MIND (nama) on the other hand, has the capability of knowing an object or holding an object, while that of matter neither have an object, holds an object, nor knows an object. 'Mind Knows an Object, While Matter Has no Faculty of Knowing'.

Logs and pillars, bricks and stones, and lumps of earth are a mass of matter; they do not possess any faculty of knowing. It is the same with material elements in a living body; they have no faculty of knowing. The material elements in a dead body are like those of a living body; they are without the faculty of knowing. There is a general misconception, however, that material elements of a living body possess the faculty of knowing an object irrespective of whether it is in a dead or a living body. In reality:

Depending on Matter, Mind comes into being. Mind inclines to an object. The uninitiated often speaks of mind as 'thought' or 'consciousness'. Mind arises depending on Matter. Hence;

***Depending on eye, Eye-consciousness (seeing) arises;
Depending on ear, Ear-consciousness (hearing) arises;
Depending on nose, Nose-consciousness (smelling) arises;
Depending on tongue, tongue-consciousness (taste) arises;
Depending on body, body-consciousness (sense of touch) arises.***

There are differing states (either pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant) of the sense of touch. While the sense of touch has a wide field of sensations by arising throughout the whole length of body, even inside and outside the body, the sense of sight, hearing, smell or taste can on the other hand come into being respectively in its own particular sphere, such as eye, ear, nose, and tongue, which occupy a very small and limited part of the body. **These senses of touch, sight, hearing, smells and taste are elements of mind.** Also there comes into being mind-consciousness (i.e., thoughts, ideas, imaginations, etc.) depending on mind-base. All of these are elements of mind. As a rule: **Mind Knows an Object; Matter Does Not.**

People generally believe that, in the case of seeing, it is the eye which actually sees. They think that seeing and eyes are one and the same thing. They also think, "Seeing is I: I see things: eyes, seeing and I are one and the same person." **In reality this is not so; 'eye' is one thing and 'seeing' another; there is no separate, independent, inner entity, 'I' or 'ego'. There is only the fact of 'seeing' coming into being depending on 'eye'.** It is similar to viewing through a window in a room; the window has no ability to see. It is the viewer who sees, but without the window, the viewer would not be able to see through the walls. Similarly, in the case of seeing there are two separate things of eye and seeing: 'eye' itself is not 'seeing', as 'seeing' cannot be without the eye. Yet there cannot be an act of seeing without the eye. In fact seeing comes into being depending on the eye. It is now evident that in the body there are only two distinctive elements of **matter (eye)** and **mind (seeing)** at every moment of seeing. In addition there is also a third element of matter; **the visual object.**

As such, there are three elements; **eye** and **visual object**; being the material element and the other being **consciousness of seeing**, which is a mental element. **'Eye'** and **'Visual object'**, being material elements do not possess any ability of knowing an object, while **'seeing'** being a mental element can know the visual object and what it looks like. **It becomes clear that there exist only these two separate elements of matter, 'eye' and 'visual object' and the co-incidence of these two separate elements is 'seeing consciousness', a mind element.** Practitioners of Vipassana have eradicated the erroneous view that seeing belongs to or is 'self' or 'ego' or 'living entity' or 'person'. They do not view: Seeing is 'I' or 'I' am seeing or 'I' know.

Through ripening of Insight Knowledge they realise that the 'self' Do Not Exist; and what has been perceived as 'self' is in reality a grouping of Matter and Mind. In reality, at the moment of seeing, the things that are in actual existence are the 'eye' and 'visual object' of the material group, and 'seeing' a mental group. ***Only these two phenomena (Matter and Mind) are in actual existence.***

Unfortunately people in general, hold the view that this group of elements (mind and matter) is 'self' or 'ego' or 'living entity'. They consider that 'seeing is I' or 'what is seen is I' or 'I see with my own eyes'. This mistaken view is conceived on the simple act that seeing is empowered by a 'self'. Most people hold this erroneous concept that there is an independent 'self' within each human being. As long as one is not free from this erroneous view (sakkaya-ditthi in Pali) of an independent 'self' within each individual, one cannot get away from the risk of falling into the miserable existence of hell, animals or petas in one's future rebirth. Rebirth takes place in any state of existence as the circumstances of one's own deeds (results of kamma) provide.

For this reason the Blessed One specifically impress on us that it is imperative to work diligently for the total removal of this false sense of a 'self' within. Every effort should be made to acquaint oneself with the suffering of the cycle of rebirth and then to strive for an escape from this recurring cycle, and attainment of Nibbana. If an exit from the cycle of rebirth as a whole is not possible for the time being, we should find a way not to be born into the realms of hell, animals, or petas. ***For this to happen, it is necessary to strive for the total removal of the erroneous view that there is a independent, empowering 'self' within. This erroneous view is the root-cause of rebirth into the miserable states*** and can only be eradicated by realising the Holy Path and its Fruition.

To find the way into the Holy Path, we need to perfect the three virtues of: ***Morality*** (sila), ***Concentration*** (samadhi) and ***Wisdom*** (panna). The Blessed One taught that to realise these three virtues, one should practise Vipassana Mindfulness Meditation, which entails noting or observing every act of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking, which are the constituent physical and mental processes of the body. This is the only way to rid ourselves of this erroneous view. When this is totally removed, rebirth into the realms of hell, animals, asuras or petas will not occur.

In this respect the exercise is simply to mindfully observe and note the existing elements in every act of seeing (and arising phenomena from the other five sense doors). It should be noted as 'seeing, seeing', on every act of seeing. ***If not noted as the phenomena arise, basing on this act of seeing (and also arising phenomena at the other five sense doors) there will arise a misconceived view of a separate 'self' within which sees, and that this separate 'self' within is a permanent entity. This view will give rise to personality attachment and craving for sensual desires. That is to say there will arise attachment for the development of the 'self' in us.***

The misconceived view will in turn originate new deeds, the deeds based on incorrect concepts will cause rebirth existences; because of this, the process of rebirth will be set in motion, bringing along attendant suffering. In order that this wrong view be prevented from evolving further after its arising, it is imperative to mindfully note 'seeing, seeing' on every occasion of seeing at the moment seeing consciousness appears. If not noted mindfully, 'seeing' will have the effect of furthering unsound deeds.

Similarly, in the case of hearing; there are only two distinct elements of matter and mind. Hearing Consciousness arises depending on ear. While Ear and Sound are two elements of Matter; Hearing Consciousness is an element of Mind. To know clearly any one of these two kinds of Matter and Mind, note; 'hearing, hearing' on every occasion of hearing. So also 'smelling, smelling' be noted on every occasion of its arising, and 'knowing, knowing' on every occasion of a taste. Similarly, it should be noted in the case of knowing or feeling the sensation or consciousness of touch in the body. Every kind of touch, either agreeable or disagreeable, usually comes in contact with nerve tissue and there arises a touch-consciousness which feels or knows the touch on each occasion.

It will now be seen that at every time of touching; there are Two elements of Matter: Sense-organ and Impression of Touch, and One element of Mind; Touch Consciousness (only these two and no "self" involved). In order to observe the reality of Matter and Mind distinctly, noting has to be carried out.

All activities in movements and in changing, etc., are initiated by mind conditioned by material elements. When the mind (caused by or due to physical conditions) wills to bend, there will arise a series of inward movements of hand or leg; when the mind wills to stretch or move, there will arise a series of outward movements or movements to and fro respectively. They disappear and are non-existent after they occur and at the very point of occurrence. It is, therefore, clear that material activities are the predominating factors in these cases. Hence, it is necessary to note these predominating factors. If not, there will arise the misconceived view that these activities originate from an 'I' within, or 'I' am bending, or 'I' am stretching, or 'My' hands, or 'My' legs. ***Hence, noting; 'bending, stretching, moving' etc., is being carried out for the purpose of removing the misconceived view that it is a conceptual 'I' that empowers thought, speech and deed; whereas in reality thought, speech and deed are conditionally arising and that there is not a 'Self', an 'I', a 'Soul' or 'An Entity' within the human frame apart from Matter and Mind, that empowers these to be done. In reality each case is a composition of matter and mind while thinking, imagining, etc., are mind-based; bodily (material) parts are matter. In order to be able to notice matter and mind clearly, it should be noted; 'thinking, imagining, etc.,' in each case.***

ADVANCEMENT IN THE PRACTICE THE IMPORTANCE OF DILIGENT NOTING

After practising in the manner indicated, there will be an improvement in concentration. One will notice that the mind no longer wanders about but that it remains fixed on the object to which it is directed. At the same time the power of noting has considerably improved. ***On every occasion of noting, one is aware of only the Two Processes of Matter and Mind. A dual set of object and mind, with mind making note of the object, Consciousness comes into realisation.***

On furthering the practice of noting the Origination and Dissolution of Mental and Physical phenomena for some time, one contemplates the nature of such Arising and Falling phenomena and observes that nothing remains permanent; all things are in a state of flux. New Mental and Physical Phenomenon originates momentarily: one notes their Origination and immediately one notes their Dissolution.

Immediately another set of Mental or Physical Phenomenon Arises or Originates, which is again noted and one notes their Dissolution. The process of arising and falling away goes on, which clearly shows that nothing is permanent. **One realises that: 'Things are not permanent'**, because one notes from one's own experience that they arise and disappears at every time of noting; **things are never consistent**; they change and are not dependable. This is insight into the characteristic of impermanency (*aniccanupassana-nana*). Then one also realises that arising and falling away is not desirable.

Usually, one experiences many painful sensations in the body; such as tiredness, excessive body temperature, pain, ache, and at the time of noting these sensations one generally feels that this body is a mass of sufferings. **This is insight into the characteristic of suffering** (*dukkhanupassana-nana*). Elements of Matter and Mind occur according to their respective nature and conditioning, and NOT according to one's wish. One realises that they are purely elements; that they are not governable; that they are not person or living entity. **This is insight into the absence of a self** (*anattanupassana-nana*).

On having fully acquired these knowledge of impermanence, suffering, absence of self (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), the maturity of spiritual knowledge of the Path and spiritual knowledge of its Fruition (*magga nana* and *phala nana*) takes place and realisation of the first stage *sotapanna* (*sotapatti magga-phala*) towards being an arahant is achieved. By this realisation, one is freed from the rounds of rebirth in unhappy existence. Everyone should endeavour to achieve this in this present life. ***Vipassana meditation is the training to note, observe and contemplate the successive occurrences of Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, Touching and Thinking as they arise at the Six Sense Doors.*** The incidents arising at the six sense doors occur very swiftly. Seeing seems to occur at the time of hearing; hearing seems to occur at the time of seeing; it seems that both seeing and hearing occur simultaneously. It seems that three or four incidents of seeing, hearing, thinking, and imagining usually occur simultaneously. It is not possible to note which occurs first and which follows next because they occur so swiftly. ***In reality, seeing Does Not occur at the time of hearing and hearing Does Not occur at the time of seeing. Such incidents occur one at a time.***

A beginner will not have sufficient mindfulness, concentration and spiritual knowledge to note all the arising phenomena; therefore, he should note as much as he is aware of. Seeing or hearing occurs only when due attention is given. If one does not pay heed to any sight or sound, one may pass the time mostly without any occasion of seeing or hearing. Smelling occurs rarely. Experience of taste occurs only at the time of eating. In the cases of seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting, the meditator can note them as they occur. However, body impressions are ever present; they usually exist quite distinctly all the time.

During the time that one is sitting, the body impressions of stiffness or the sensation of hardness in this position are distinctly felt. Attention should, therefore, be fixed on the sitting posture and a note made; 'sitting, sitting'. Sitting is an erect posture of the body consisting of a series of physical activities which are induced by the consciousness consisting of a series of mental activities. It is like an inflated rubber ball which maintains its round shape through the resistance of the air inside: so is the posture of sitting, in which the body is kept in an erect posture through the continuous process of physical activities. People generally assume that the body is lifted and kept in the position by means of sinews. This assumption is correct in the ordinary sense because sinews, blood, flesh, and bones are material elements. The element of stiffening which keeps the body in an erect posture belongs to the material group and arises in the sinews, flesh, blood, etc., throughout the body like the air in a rubber ball. At the time of heavy drowsiness one may drop flat, as the supply of new material in the form of stiffening is cut off. The state of mind in heavy drowsiness or sleep is unconsciousness (bhavanga).

During the course of unconsciousness mental activities are absent, and for this reason the body lies flat during sleep or heavy drowsiness. During waking hours, strong and active mental activities are continually arising, and because of these there arises a series of air elements in the form of stiffening. ***In order to know these facts it is essential to note attentively: 'sitting, sitting'.*** This does not necessarily mean that the body impressions of stiffening should be particularly searched and noted. Attention need only be fixed on the whole form of sitting posture, that is, the lower portion in a bending circular form and the upper portion in an erect posture.

The exercise of observing a single object of sitting posture does not require much effort. In such circumstances vigour is less and concentration is in excess, and one would generally feel lazy to carry on the noting as 'sitting, sitting', repeatedly for a considerable time. Laziness generally occurs when concentration is in excess of vigour. This will lead to a state of torpor (*thina-midha*). Vigour should be exerted, and for this purpose the number of objects for noting should be increased. After noting the sitting posture of the body as 'sitting', the spot where the sense of touch is felt should be noted as 'touching'. The noting should be repeated on these two objects of sitting posture and the place of touching alternately, as 'sitting, touching; sitting, touching; sitting, touching'. The terms noting or observing or contemplating are used here to indicate the **fixing of attention on an object. The exercise is simply to note, observe and contemplate as 'sitting, touching'**. Those who already have experience in the practice of meditation may perhaps find this exercise easy to begin with, but those without any previous experience may find it rather difficult. The more simplified and easy form of exercise for a beginner is to observe or note the form of rising and falling of one's abdomen. A beginner should start with this exercise of noting or observing these movements. It is easy to observe these movements because they are associated with our breathing; they are coarse and prominent and are easily observed.

As in schools where simple lessons are easy to learn so is the case in the practice of Vipassana meditation. A beginner will find it easier to develop concentration and spiritual knowledge with this simple and easy exercise. Initially, the practical exercise in Vipassana meditation is to (mentally) observe, note and contemplate prominent factors in the body. Of the two elements, mind and matter, the mental element is subtle and less prominent while the material element is coarse and more prominent. Therefore, the usual procedure for one who practises Vipassana insight meditation is to begin the exercise by contemplating the material elements. The four primary physical elements of earth, water, heat and air are coarse and more prominent and are suitable objects for contemplation. In the case of rising and falling of the abdomen, the outstanding factor is the air element. The process of stiffening and the movements of abdomen noticed during the contemplation are the functions of this element.

WANDERING MIND

The Blessed One taught that one should be mindful of the activities of walking while walking; of standing, sitting and lying down while standing, sitting, and lying down, respectively. One should also be mindful of other bodily activities as they occur; one should be mindful primarily of the air element in relation to the other three. As a matter of fact, all four elements of dense physical matter are dominant in every action of the body, and it is essential to note any one of these. At the time of sitting, either of the two movements of rising and falling occurs conspicuously at every time of breathing, and a beginning should be made by noting one of these movements.

While thus being occupied with noting rising and falling, there are occasions when the mind wanders about. When concentration is weak it is very difficult to observe the mind. Though it is directed to the movements of rising and falling, the mind will not stay with them but will wander away. ***This wandering mind should not be left alone.*** A note should be made; 'wandering, wandering' as soon as the mind wanders away. On noting repeatedly once or twice when the mind stops wandering, then the exercise of noting as 'rising, falling' should be continued. ***These instructions are to emphasise the necessity to note every mental activity singularly as it arises in the mind.*** This noting of mental activities as they occur is Cittanupassana; Mindfulness of the Mind. People in general, are not aware of the reality of the mind. This ignorance naturally leads them to view mind as a person, a self or a living entity. They have lived with this concept since their birth; they believed that: ***Imagination is 'I'; 'I am imagining; 'I am thinking; 'I am planning; 'I know, and so forth.*** Most people have lived with the deluded mindset that there exists a living entity (or atta) or self within, which is inherent within them since birth. In reality there does not exist such a living entity within them, but only a continuous process of elements of mind which arises singly at rapid succession. The practice of contemplation is, therefore, being carried out with a view to realising that reality.

MIND OCCURS SINGLY IN RAPID SUCCESSION

Those, who do not perceive that mind occurs singly in rapid succession, believe that there is only a single mind in them that exist in the course of their lives. They do not realise that numerous new minds (thought forms) are always arising at every moment.

They conceive that seeing, hearing, etc., of the past and those of the present belong to one and the same mind, and that three or four acts of seeing, hearing, touching, knowing usually occur simultaneously. These are deluded views. ***In Reality, any arising mental activity, and or any arising thought is the arising of a Single New Mind.*** This can be perceived when practice and concentration has matured. The instances of imagination and planning are clearly perceptible. Imagination disappears as soon as it is noted as 'imagining, imagining', and planning also disappears as soon as it is noted as 'planning, planning'. These instances of arising, noting, and disappearing, occur like a string of beads. ***The preceding mind is not the following mind, each mind is a distinctive separate unit. This insight is directly seen through mindful contemplation. Mind is without form and is indistinguishable; unlike Matter, which has form as in the structure of the body, head, hands and legs. Matter is easily noticed, Mind is not.***

MIND STAYS IN A CAVE

When Vipassana is fairly advanced, the mind's approach to its object is clearly observed and comprehended. It appears as if each is making a direct leap towards its object. ***Mind comes into existence depending on mind-base and the sense doors of the material body;*** it is said that mind stays in the cave. Mind can only be known by means of contemplative noting; that is through observing and noting on every occasion mind arises. Through such mindful noting, insight wisdom is realised. The meditator then realises the inherent reality of the mind; he would then be able to eradicate defilement and this will help to avoid being reborn into the suffering planes. It must now be realised that it is important to note the mind at every moment of its arising. As soon as it is noted mind is no more. For instance, by noting once or twice as 'intending, intending' it is found that intention disappears at once. During the time of proceeding with noting, one may feel different sensations and desires; as in the urge to swallow. This urge should be noted as 'urge to swallow' and on noting the process of preparing to swallow, note 'preparing, preparing', and on swallowing as 'swallowing, swallowing', in the order of their arising. The reason for contemplating in this case is as in all similar cases, is that there may be a persisting personal view as 'wanting to swallow' is 'I'; 'swallowing' is also 'I'. These are deluded concepts. ***In reality, The intention 'wanting to swallow' is Mind Consciousness and not I and the act of 'swallowing' is Material Activity and not I. As such, there exists only MIND and MATTER at that time.***

By means of contemplation in this manner the reality of Mind and Matter is realised. So, also in the case of drinking it should be noted as 'wanting' when one wants to drink, as 'bending' on bending the neck (which should be done slowly), as 'looking', on looking and as 'drinking' when drinking. After noting, the primary exercise of observing and noting 'rising, falling' should be continued.

While sitting in meditation for a considerable length of time, there will arise in the body unpleasant feelings of stiffness, warmth and so forth; these sensations should be noted as soon as they occur. Mind should be fixed on the spot and a note made as 'stiff, stiff' on feeling stiff, as 'warm, warm' on feeling warm, as 'painful, painful' on feeling painful, and 'prickly, prickly' on feeling a prickly sensation, and as 'tired, tired' on feeling tired. These unpleasant feelings are feelings of pain (dukkha vedana) and the noting of these feelings is insight into feeling (vedana-nupassana).

Those who have no knowledge of insight into feeling, misconceive the view that feelings are their own personality or self. They believe that; it is the self or 'I' that is feeling; such as 'I am feeling stiff; I am feeling warm; I am feeling painful; I was feeling well before but now I feel uncomfortable'. In reality, unpleasant feelings arise owing to disagreeable impressions in the body. Like the light of an electric bulb which can continue to burn on the continuous supply of energy so is the case of feelings, which arise anew in series on every occasion of coming in contact with disagreeable impressions. It is essential to understand these feelings clearly. At the beginning of noting; 'stiff, stiff; warm, warm; painful, painful' the student may feel that such disagreeable feeling grows stronger, and then the student will notice that the mind wanting to change the posture arises. This mind should be noted as 'wanting, wanting'. Then a return should be made to the feeling and noted as 'stiff, stiff', or 'warm, warm', and so forth. If the noting is continued with patience in this manner, such unpleasant feelings will pass away. 'Patience leads to Nibbana' This is more applicable in this case of meditation than in any other actions. Great patience is needed in Vipassana practice. If a student cannot bear unpleasant feelings with patience, but frequently changes his posture during his practice, he cannot expect to gain concentration. Without concentration knowledge of insight (Vipassana-nana) cannot be realised. Patience is much needed to bear up unpleasant feelings.

The student should not change his posture immediately when he feels unpleasant sensations but proceed with noting them as 'stiff, stiff; warm, warm'; and so on. When concentration is well developed, even severe pain will pass away when they are being noted with patience. However, it may be found that pains or unpleasant feelings do not pass away in spite of noting with great patience. In such a case and should a change of posture be necessary, the intention to change and the actual change should be performed mindfully and each movement of change be mindfully noted. Any and all observed physical movements of the body during the course of meditation should be noted; should the body sway, it should be noted as 'swaying, swaying'; on raising the leg as 'raising, raising'; on moving as 'moving, moving'; and on putting down as 'putting, putting'. ***The preceding act of noting and the one which follows should be without a break in between.*** Similarly the preceding concentration and the one which follows should be close together without a break in between, and the preceding spiritual knowledge (nana) and the one which follows should also be close together without a break. In this manner the gradual development, by stages, of mindfulness, concentration and spiritual knowledge takes place, and depending on their full development the final stage of spiritual knowledge of the Path (magga-nana) is attained.

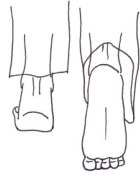
The practice of Vipassana is akin to kindling a fire by rubbing two dry sticks together. As the sticks heat up, rubbing have to be carried out briskly and incessantly till fire is started. Similarly a student should work hard so that: ***There should not be any break between the preceding noting and the one which follows; the preceding concentration and the one which follows.*** While occupied with his primary exercise of noting rising and falling, the student may feel itching sensations somewhere in the body. He should then fix his mind on the spot and make a note as 'itching, itching'. Itching is an unpleasant sensation. As soon as it is felt there arises a mind wanting to rub or scratch. This mind should be noted as 'wanting, wanting', after which rubbing should not be done as yet but a return must be made to itching and a note made as 'itching, itching'. While occupied with contemplation in this manner, and concentration is well developed, itching may disappear. Then the primary exercise of noting as 'rising, falling' should be continued. Otherwise, if itching does not disappear and it becomes necessary to rub or scratch, the contemplation of the successive movements should be carried out by noting the mind as 'wanting, wanting'.

While diligently noting, it may be realised that painful feelings or unpleasant sensations arise in the body of their own accord. Most meditators change posture as soon as the slightest unpleasant sensation of tiredness or warm feelings arises. The change is carried out just as pain is beginning to be felt. If this is allowed to happen, painful feelings will fail to take place in a distinctive manner and the whole spectrum of pain unfolding will be missed. The meditator will fail to observe the different phases and grades of pain. ***For this reason it is said that posture hides the painful feelings from the view of reality.*** Generally, most people cannot maintain a sitting posture for long periods without moving or changing; they will feel uncomfortable after a while, and will be unable to bear the discomfort. Such unbearable feelings will cause physical movements; such as movements of the head, the hands, legs or swaying of the body. ***In the course of a normal day numerous such movements will occur; however, they are not being taken heed of as they are not sufficiently prominent to be noticed.***

While in the case of a meditator who is mindful of his actions and is proceeding with diligent noting, body impressions are distinctly noticed. Hence, these physical movements are easily observed. Though a painful sensation arises, the diligent and mindful meditator keeps on noting it; he does not ordinarily attempt to change or move his posture. Then on the arising of a mind desiring to change position, he initially makes a note of it as 'wanting, wanting' and revert to the painful sensation, noting; 'pain, pain'. He does not immediately make the change. ***He changes or moves only when after a long while he finds the pain unbearable; in which case he begins by noting the mind 'wanting, wanting', and proceeds with noting carefully every action in the process of changing position.*** In this case the composed posture opens up the sensation of pain to view. The posture can no longer hide painful sensation. Often a student feels painful sensations creeping from here and there or he may feel a warm sensation, aching sensation, itching, or he may feel that the whole body is a mass of painful sensation. That is how painful sensations are found to be predominating because posture cannot hide these movements from a diligent and mindful student. While in the course of standing up or rising, there occurs lightness in the body. Attention should be fixed on these arising phenomena and a note made as 'rising, rising'. The act of rising up should be carried out slowly.

During the course of practice it is most appropriate if a student acts and moves slowly similar to a sick person in pain. This deliberate slowing down of movements is necessary to enable mindfulness, concentration, and spiritual knowledge to be realised, as in the hastiness of normal daily life, people are unable to maintain mindfulness. It is also advisable that a meditator's stance in the course of training be in an alert and composed manner, restrained and sitting sedately with closed eyes, steady and calm as in the case of a person who is blind. Similarly a student should behave like a deaf person and conduct himself in like manner without taking heed of talk or deliberately listen to any. If he happens to hear any sound or talk he should immediately make a note; 'hearing, hearing', and then return to the primary exercise of noting as 'rising, falling'. He should proceed with his meditation intently as though he cannot hear. It should be remembered that the carrying out intently of meditation is the only concern of a student; other things seen or heard are not his concern and need only to be noted as 'seeing, seeing', or hearing, hearing, as the case may be.

The act of pulling up the body to the standing posture should be carried out slowly. All movements in standing up should be noted. On coming to a standing position a note should be made as 'standing, standing'; if he happens to look around, a note should be made as 'looking, seeing'; and on walking each step should be noted as 'right step, left step' or 'walking, walking'. Attention should be fixed on the movement from the point of lifting the leg to the point of putting down; while walking in quick steps or taking



long walks, note on one section of each step as 'right step, left step' or 'walking, walking'. In the case of taking a slow walk, each step may be divided into three sections of lifting, pushing forward and putting down respectively. In the beginning of the exercise a note should be made on two sections in each step as 'lifting', by fixing the attention on the upward movement of the leg from the beginning to the end, and as 'putting' on the downward movement from the beginning to the end. At the time of noting as 'putting' when the leg is let down in the first step, the other leg will habitually begin the next step. This should not be allowed to happen. The next step should begin only after the completion of the first step, such as 'lifting, putting' for the first one and 'lifting, putting' for the next step. Begin by noting as 'right step, left step', or 'walking, walking' while walking quickly, and by noting as 'lifting, putting' while walking slowly.

Should the urge to sit down arise the student should make a note; 'wanting, wanting'; if he looks up as 'looking, looking'; on going to the place for sitting as 'lifting, putting'; on stopping as 'stopping, stopping'; on turning as 'turning, turning'; wanting to sit as 'wanting, wanting'. In the act of sitting there occurs a heavy feeling in the body and also a downward pull. Attention should be fixed on these factors and a note made as 'sitting, sitting'. After having sat down there would be movements of bringing the hands and legs into position. These should be noted as 'moving, bending, stretching'. If he feels sleepy he should make a note as 'sleepy, sleepy', and proceed with the noting of all acts of preparing for lying down and bringing into position the hands and legs. Mindfully noting these acts in lying down are necessary and they should not be neglected. ***Every care is, therefore, needed to carry on the practice of noting without neglect or omission.***

The action of lying down is to be carried out very slowly. On touching the pillow it should be noted as 'touching, touching'; there are many places of touch all over the body but each spot only need be noted at one time. In the lying position there are many bodily actions for bringing the legs and hands into position also. These actions are to be noted carefully, such as 'raising, stretching, bending, moving', and so on. On turning the body a note should be made as 'turning, turning' and when there is nothing particular the primary exercise of noting as 'rising, falling' is to be continued. There may be instances of swallowing or movements in the mouth area, or feeling of painful sensations, hot sensations, itching sensations, etc., or of bodily actions in changing the position and moving the limbs. These are to be noted and contemplated on as each occurs. When sufficient strength in concentration is gained it will be possible even to carry on with the contemplation of each act of opening and closing of the eyelids and winking.

Though it is late in the night and it is time for sleep, it is not advisable to give up the meditation and go to sleep. Anyone who has a keen interest in the practice must be prepared to endure many nights without sleep. In the hard struggle the meditator may be reduced to a mere skeleton of skin, bone and sinew; even his flesh and blood shall wither away and dry up but he should not give up his efforts so long as he has not attained whatever is attainable by manly perseverance, energy and endeavor. ***These instructions should be adhered to with strong determination.*** It will be possible to keep awake if there is strong enough concentration to beat off sleep.

However, in spite of determination, meditator may not be able to keep himself awake. To avoid falling asleep a beginner should continue his practice in the sitting and walking postures. During the night he can continue noting while lying down; in this position he may perhaps fall asleep. However, it would not be advisable for a student to sleep more than four hours. A student should start his contemplation from the moment he is awake. ***To be fully occupied with diligent noting throughout the waking hours is the routine of a student who practises with true aspiration for the attainment of path and its fruition.***

Should he become aware of the fact of reflecting he should begin his contemplation by noting as 'reflecting, reflecting', and then revert to the primary exercise of noting as 'rising, falling'. Or if he becomes aware firstly of hearing a voice or sound he should begin by noting as 'hearing, hearing', and then revert to the primary exercise of noting; 'rising, falling'. As soon as one wakes up there may be physical actions in turning this side or that side, and in moving the hands and legs and so forth. These actions should be noted in their successive order of arising. Should he become aware of the mind leading to various bodily actions he should start his contemplation by noting the mind in the first place. Or if he becomes aware firstly of the painful sensations he should start by noting the painful sensations and then proceed with bodily actions. If he stays quietly without moving, the primary exercise of noting as 'rising, falling' is to be attended to. Noting should be carried out also in the case of hygiene in the morning or when taking a shower. It is necessary to be diligent in the practice, therefore, noting should be carried out as detailed as possible. There are also many actions in changing or arranging the clothing, in arranging the bed or bed sheets, and in opening the door and so on. All bodily and mental actions should be noted in detail successively as much as possible. As in the case of taking a meal, contemplation should be started from the time of looking at the meal table as 'looking, seeing; looking, seeing';
 when stretching the hand to the plate as 'stretching, stretching';
 when the hand touches the food as 'touching, hot, hot';
 when gathering the food as 'gathering, gathering';
 when catching hold of the food as 'catching, catching';
 after lifting when the hand is being brought up as 'bringing, bringing';
 when the neck is being bent down as 'bending, bending'.
 When the food is being placed in the mouth as 'placing, placing';
 when withdrawing the hand as 'withdrawing, withdrawing'.

When the hand touches the plate as 'touching, touching';
 when the neck is being straightened as 'straightening, straightening';
 when chewing the food as 'chewing, chewing'.
 when he likes the taste as 'liking, liking';
 when he finds it pleasant as 'pleasant, pleasant';
 when swallowing as 'swallowing, swallowing'.

It will be difficult to follow up all actions at the beginning of the practice. The meditator should not, however, hesitate but must try and follow up as much as he can. With the gradual advancement of the practice it will be easy to note many more than those mentioned here.

CONTEMPLATION

It will be appropriate at this juncture to have an appreciation of the act of 'contemplation' in the context of Vipassana meditation. As one observes the arising of mind and matter, one sees for oneself that all arising phenomena will arise and also disappears, following the moment of their arising. At the moment of their appearing and disappearing one realises that each and every phenomenon do not last; that they will appear and they will disappear. When sufficient mindfulness has concentrated one's mind, one will then realise that these arising and disappearing phenomena are truly of the character of impermanence. This realisation did not arise due to thinking or intelligent analysis, it arose due to direct observation by one self. One further realises that given the impermanent nature of all arising and disappearing phenomena; that such arising and disappearing phenomena are truly unstable and unsatisfactory, they are inconsistent and one cannot depend on them for any stability. Continuing on in this mental state of observing the true state of arising and disappearing phenomena, one comes to realise that there is nothing oneself can do to prevent their arising and disappearing; one realises that these phenomena come and go due to conditions that initiate their coming and going. Due to these forms of mental observation, known as contemplation, one realises the characteristic of all phenomena; that they are impermanent; of a suffering nature and that there is not an entity call soul or self that one can depend on to empower these conditional arising and disappearing. By such contemplation one is able to realise the form and construction of mind and matter and hence realise further direct knowledge that will bring about Vipassana insight knowledge or supramundane wisdom. Contemplation is the realisation of this process going through the mind. Hence contemplation in the context of Vipassana is the process of reality formed in the mind by direct observation.

SUMMARY: IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL POINTS

While in a sitting posture the primary exercise of noting the movements of the abdomen as 'rising, falling; rising, falling' should be carried out. The same manner of noting as 'rising, falling; rising, falling' should be carried out in the case of lying posture also. If the practice is continued in the manner indicated, the number of objects noted will gradually increase. At first there will be many omissions because the untrained mind will habitually wander. This difficulty is usually encountered in the beginning of the practice. After some time mind cannot play truant any longer because it is always found out every time it wanders. It, therefore, remains fixed on an object to which it is directed. As rising occurs, the mind makes a note of it; the object and the mind coincide. As falling occurs, the mind makes a note of it; these two coincide. ***There is always a pair, Object and Mind; the Mind Knows the Object at every time of noting. There are only these two elements: Material Object and Knowing Mind arising in A Pair. Apart from these two there does not exist any other thing, either in the form of person or self. The student will realise this truth directly by himself in due course of practice.***

The fact that **Matter** and **Mind** are two separate things will be clearly perceived during the time of noting the 'rising and falling' of the abdomen. The two elements of Matter and Mind are linked up in a pair and the arising coincides, that is, the material process of rising coincides with the mind knowing it, the material process of falling coincides with the mind knowing it, and the respective processes of lifting, pushing, putting coincide with the respective minds knowing the processes. ***This Knowledge in respect of Matter and Mind rising separately is Spiritual Knowledge of Insight*** (nama-rupa pariccheda nana). It is the preliminary stage in the whole course of spiritual knowledge of insight. It is important to have this preliminary stage developed in a proper manner. On continuing the practice of meditation for some time, there will be a considerable progress in mindfulness and concentration. At this advanced level it will be realised that, on every occasion of noting, each element of mind and matter arises and disappears at the very moment. However, in those who are not Vipassana trained, they generally consider that body and mind are one and that they remain in a permanent state throughout their life, that the same body of their birth had matured into manhood, that the same young mind has matured and that both body and mind are one and the same person.

Unfortunately, the Reality is Not So. Nothing is Permanent. Everything comes into existence for a moment, and then disappears. Nothing can remain static even for a moment. Changes are taking place very swiftly and this will be realised by the Vipassana practitioner in due course. On realising that everything disappears at the very point of noting, a student is satisfied with the fact that nothing is permanent. This knowledge regarding the impermanent state of things is spiritual insight into transience (anicca-nupassana-nana). A student then feels that this ever-changing state of things is distressing and not to be desired. This is insight into suffering (dukkhanupassana-nana).

Then it is realised that the elements of Matter and Mind do not comply with one's wish, but they act according to their own nature and conditioning. While being engaged in the act of noting the processes, a student is convinced that these processes are not controllable and they are neither person nor living entity nor self in the real sense. This is insight into the Absence of a Self (anattanupassana-nana).

When taking up the course of training in Vipassana, students should bear in mind that they are on the high way which had been travelled on by Blessed Ones, Arahants and Holy Ones. This present opportunity accorded to them is due to their perfection of previous aspirations and endeavors, and also of their present mature condition. They should find joy with this opportunity. They should also feel assured that by walking on this high way without wavering, they will gain the personal experience of the highly developed concentration and knowledge as had already been known to Blessed Ones, Arahants and Holy Ones.

**BOOK II
PRACTICAL INSIGHT MEDITATION
BASIC AND PROGRESSIVE
STAGES**

**SITTING AND WALKING MEDITATION
BASIC PRACTICE**

A Mahasi Discourse

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Basic Practice: Sitting Meditation	75
Basic Exercise I Noting Matter	75
Basic Exercise II Noting Mental Activities	76
Basic Exercise III Noting Arising Phenomena	77
Advancing the Practice	79
Basic Exercise IV	80
Walking Meditation	81
Characteristics of the Four Elements	82

BASIC PRACTICE: SITTING MEDITATION



Life is Uncertain and Precarious, Sure and Certain is Death; For the Uninitiated there is Suffering and Rebirth. Vipassana is The Only Gateway to Deathlessness.

In the Great Discourse on the **Four Foundations of Mindfulness** (Maha Satipatthana Sutta DN22) where the Buddha discoursed on mindfulness meditation, He states: "A bhikkhu

knows, 'I am going', when he is going; he knows, 'I am standing', when he is standing; he knows, 'I am sitting', when he is sitting; he knows, 'I am lying down', when he is lying down or just as his body is disposed, so he knows it." Here the Buddha was instructing the bhikkhus (monks) to apply mindfulness, concentration and clear comprehension to all of four postures in meditation. The primary posture for meditation is sitting with legs crossed; this position has the advantage of stabilising the body, assisting in the development of concentration; however, walking meditation is an important part of the process of the uninterrupted accumulation of mindfulness. There are two other positions; lying down and standing. All the four positions have their functions; meditators are mostly concern with the sitting and walking meditation.

BASIC EXERCISE I: NOTING MATTER (rupa)

To begin training, take the sitting posture with legs crossed. You might feel more comfortable if the legs are not interlocked but evenly placed on the ground, without pressing one against the other. If you find that sitting on the floor interferes with contemplation, then obtain a more comfortable way of sitting. The primary exercise is to be aware of the rising and falling movements of the abdomen when breathing in and out. If these movements are not clear in the beginning, then place both hands on the abdomen to feel these rising and falling movements. When your concentration improves in the course of your practice, the upward movement and the downward movement of the abdomen will become clear. As you become aware of the abdomen rising, make a mental note, 'rising' for the upward movement, 'falling' for the downward movement. When noting the phenomena of rising and falling; the student should keep his mental awareness on the movements of the abdomen; not the material abdomen.

He will come to know the upward movement (expansion) of the abdomen while breathing in, and a downward movement (contraction) while breathing out. A mental note should be made as 'rising' for upward movements, and 'falling' for downward movements. If these movements are not clearly noticed by mental observation, one or both hands can be placed on the abdomen to feel the movements.

In observing the rising and falling movements, the student should maintain his natural breathing and not attempt to slow down or increase the tempo of his breathing, as this will soon tire him. He should keep to a natural breathing, and proceed with the noting of rising and falling. Occasions may arise where awareness of the rising and falling of the abdomen be confused with the breathing process, in which case a note must be made of 'breathing, breathing', and awareness be directed back to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Bear in mind that the primary object of meditation is the rising and falling of the abdomen, other arising object, including the breath is the secondary object; to be noted and attention be reverted back to the rising and falling of the abdomen. The labeling of the notings should not be verbal; as it is only necessary to know the actual state of the object than to know it by the term or name.

The student should make every effort to be ***diligently mindful of the movement of rising from the beginning till the end and that of falling from the start to the finish***, as if these movements are actually seen by the eyes. As soon as rising occurs, there should be the knowing mind swiftly locking on to the movement, as an arrow swiftly connecting with the target: ***The movement of rising as it occurs and the mind knowing it must coincide on each and every occasion. Similarly the movement of falling as it occurs and the mind knowing it must coincide on each and every occasion.***

BASIC EXERCISE II: NOTING MENTAL ACTIVITIES (nama)

While observing the abdominal movements, other mental activities may occur between the noting of each rising and falling. Thoughts or other mental functions, such as intentions, ideas, imagination, are likely to arise between each mental note of rising and falling. They cannot be disregarded. A mental note must be made of each as it occurs. ***When imagining; mentally note 'imagining'. When thinking; mentally note 'thinking'. When reflecting; mentally note 'reflecting'. When intending to do a deed; mentally note 'intending'.***

When the mind wanders away from the primary object of meditation, mentally note 'wandering'. When thinking of meeting a person, note 'thinking'. When imagining an argument; mentally note, 'arguing'. Any mental vision, every intention arising must be noted, after which return to observing the rising and falling of the abdomen. Proceed diligently, without slackening.

BASIC EXERCISE III: NOTING ARISING PHENOMENA

The student, after meditating for a considerable length of time in one position; that of sitting or lying down, is likely to experience feelings of fatigue, stiffness in the body, the arms or the legs. Should this happen, simply keep the knowing mind on that part of the body where such feeling occurs and carry on the practice, noting 'tired, tired' or 'stiff, stiff'. This is to be done naturally; neither too fast nor too slow. These feelings gradually become fainter and finally cease altogether. Should one of these feelings become more intense or unbearable, only then should the position be changed. However, do not forget to make a mental note of 'intending, intending', before executing the change of position. Each movement must be noted in its respective order. ***Then in the act of lifting the hand or leg, 'lifting, lifting'; stretching the hand or the leg, 'stretching, stretching'. When bending, 'bending, bending'. When putting down, 'putting, putting'. Should either the hand or leg touch, 'touching, touching'. Perform all these actions in a slow and deliberate manner.***

As soon as the student is settled in the new position, continue with the contemplation of the abdominal movements. If it becomes uncomfortably warm in the new position resume meditation in another position keeping to the procedure as described in this paragraph. Should an itching sensation be felt in any part of the body, keep the mind on that part and make a mental note, 'itching, itching'. Do this in a regulated manner, neither too fast nor too slow. Should the itching continue and become too strong and you intend to rub the itching part, be sure to make a mental note, 'intending, intending'; then, slowly lift the hand, simultaneously noting the action of 'lifting', and 'touching' when the hand touches the part that itches. Rub slowly in complete awareness of 'rubbing'.

When the itching sensation has disappeared and there is intention to discontinue the rubbing, mindfully note; 'intending, intending'; slowly withdraw the hand, noting the action, 'withdrawing, withdrawing'. When the hand rests and touches the leg; note 'touching, touching'. Then again devote your time to observing the rising and falling of the abdomen.

If there is pain or discomfort, keep the knowing mind on that part of the body where the sensation arises. Make a mental note of the specific sensation as it occurs, such as 'painful, aching, pressing, piercing', or as the case may be.

It must be stressed that the mental note must not be forced or delayed but made in a calm and natural manner at the moment of the arising phenomenon. The pain may eventually cease or increase. Do not be alarmed if it increases. Firmly continue meditating. If you do so, you will find that the pain will almost always cease. But if, after a time, the pain has increased and becomes almost unbearable, you must ignore the pain and continue with the noting of rising and falling. As mindfulness improves, stifling or choking sensations; sensations of intense pain, such as pain from the slash of a knife, the thrust of a sharp-pointed instrument; unpleasant sensations of being pricked by sharp needles, or small insects crawling over the body may arise. Other sensations of itching, biting, intense cold may also arise. As soon as meditation is discontinued, these painful sensations will cease. When meditation is resumed they may also reappear.

These painful sensations are not to be considered as something serious. They are not manifestations of disease but are common factors always present in the body and are usually obscured as the mind is normally distracted with other more conspicuous objects. As the practice improves and the faculties of Faith, Effort, Concentration, Mindfulness and Wisdom, is advanced and becomes keener, awareness of these sensations are more pronounced. With the continued development of the practice, the time will arrive when these sensations are overcome and they cease altogether. If noting is continued diligently, these sensations will cease. Should noting be intermittent, these unpleasant sensations may arise again and again as your practice proceeds. With diligent, steadfast noting and wise contemplation in the practice, these painful sensations may never again arise.

Occasionally, during the practice, swaying of the body may occur. Do not be alarmed; neither be pleased nor wish to continue swaying, as this movement can be a source of pleasant feeling. The swaying will cease when noted. If swaying increases in spite of your making mental note of it, then lean against a wall or post or lie down for a while. Thereafter continue with the practice. Follow the same procedure if you find yourself shaking or trembling. You may sometimes feel a thrill or chill pass through the back or the entire body.

This is a feeling of intense interest, enthusiasm or rapture. It occurs naturally in the course of diligent practice. When your mind is concentrated in your meditation, you may be startled at the slightest sound; do not be overly concerned, as this is the result of intensified sensorial impression while in the state of deep concentration.

When you intend to stand, 'intending'. Then make a mental note of each movement in the preparation to stand. Keep the mind intently on the act of standing up, and mentally note, 'standing'. When standing for some time, continue noting rising and falling. When sitting, sit down slowly, and keep the mind on the downward movement of the body. You must note every movement in bringing hands and legs into position, after which, resume the noting of the abdominal movements. When intending to lie down; note 'intending'; then proceed with diligent noting every movement in the course of lying down: 'lifting, stretching, leaving, touching, lying'. Make a mental note of 'drowsy', when drowsy, and 'sleepy', when sleepy. After you have gained sufficient concentration in the practice, you will be able to overcome drowsiness and sleepiness and feel refreshed as a result. Take up again the primary noting of the rising and falling of the abdomen. Suppose you are unable to overcome a drowsy feeling; you must then continue to meditate until you fall asleep.

The practice of meditation should begin at the moment of waking up. Therefore, when opening the eyes at the moment of waking up and in the process of getting up from the bed, mindfulness should be directed to every detail of the body's activity. Each movement of the hands, legs and all other involved physical elements must be performed in complete awareness. Perform the acts of washing the face or taking a bath in their order and in complete awareness of every detailed movement; for instance, 'looking, seeing, stretching, holding, touching, feeling cold, rubbing'. In the acts of dressing, making the bed, opening and closing doors and windows, handling objects, diligently note every detail of these actions in their order.

ADVANCING THE PRACTICE

After having meditated for some time, you may find your practice of the basic exercise of noting the abdominal rising and falling has considerably improved. At this time you will note that there is generally a break between the movements of rising and falling. If you are in the sitting posture, fill in this pause with a mental note on the act of sitting, in this way: 'rising, falling, sitting'.

When you make a mental note of sitting, keep your mind on the erect position of the upper body. When you are lying down you should proceed with full awareness as follows: 'rising, falling, lying'. If you find this easy, continue with noting these three sections. Should you note that a pause occurs at the end of the rising as well as the falling movement, then continue in this manner: 'rising, sitting, falling, sitting'; or if lying down: 'rising, lying, falling, lying'. When conditions change and you no longer find it easy to make a mental note of three or four objects in the above manner; then revert to the initial procedure of noting only the two sections, 'rising' and 'falling'. **Should any distinctive phenomenon arise from any of the six sense doors; note each as they come to your mind.** If you fail to note such distinctive sights and sounds as they occur, you may inadvertently fall into reflections about them instead of proceeding with diligent noting of rising and falling, which may then become less distinct and clear. It is by such weakened attention that mind-defiling passions breed. If such reflections do occur, make two or three times the mental note, 'reflecting', and again take up the noting of rising and falling. Should you forget to make a mental note of body, leg or arm movements, then mentally note 'forgetting', and resume your usual noting of the abdominal movements.

You may feel at times that breathing is slow or that the rising and falling movements of the abdomen are not clearly perceived. When this happens, and you are in the sitting position, simply carry on the attention to 'sitting, touching'; if you are lying down, 'lying, touching'. While noting 'touching', your mind should not be kept on the same part of the body but on different parts successively. There are several places of touch and at least six or seven should be noted.

BASIC EXERCISE IV

Up to this point you have devoted quite some time to the training course. You might begin to feel lazy after deciding that you have made inadequate progress; note the fact, 'lazy'. Before you gain sufficient strength in awareness, concentration and insight, you may doubt the correctness or usefulness of this method of training. In such a circumstance, note 'doubtful'. If you had anticipated or wish for good results; note 'anticipating' or 'wishing'. When attempting to recall the manner in which this training was conducted note 'recollecting'. When regretting that there is no perceivable improvement; note 'regret'.

If feeling happy, note 'happy'. This is the way in which you make a mental note of every item of mental behavior as it occurs, and if there are no intervening thoughts or perceptions to note, you should continue with the primary meditation object of noting rising and falling of the abdomen.

During a strict course of meditation, the time of practice is from the first moment you wake up until you fall asleep. To repeat, you must be constantly occupied either with the basic exercise or with mindful attention throughout the day and during those hours when you are not asleep. There must be no relaxation. Upon reaching a certain stage of progress in your practice, you will not feel sleepy in spite of prolonged hours. On the contrary, you will be able to continue meditating day and night.

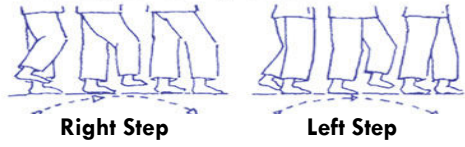
WALKING MEDITATION - Sayadaw u Silananda (An edited excerpt)

Meditators practising mindfulness in the four different postures, walking, standing, sitting and lying down, must maintain mindfulness at all times in whatever position they are in. Walking meditation is of equal importance to sitting meditation as there are significant benefits and materialising of supramundane knowledge arising from its practise. The practise of mindfulness meditation can be compared to boiling water. If one wants to boil water, one puts the water in a kettle, puts the kettle over a stove, and then turns the heat on. But if the heat is turned off and on, the water will not reach boiling point. In the same way, if there are gaps breaking up mindfulness, one cannot gain momentum, and concentration will not be achieved. Meditators are advised to practise mindfulness the moment they are awake in the morning until they fall asleep at night.

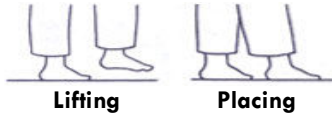
The Blessed One taught that a meditator should be aware: "I am walking" when he is walking; that "I am standing" when he is standing; that "I am sitting" when he is sitting, and that "I am lying down" when he is lying down. A meditator should also apply clear comprehension in going forward and in going back. **Clear Comprehension** means the correct understanding of what one observes. To correctly understand what is observed, a meditator must gain concentration, and in order to gain concentration, he must apply mindfulness. In the beginning of the practice, meditators may find it difficult to do this. However, they need to pay close attention to the movements of lifting, moving forward, putting down, and pressing the ground with the feet; therefore it is very important that they reduce the speed of their walking pace.

STEPS IN WALKING MEDITATION

THE 1ST STAGE OF WALKING MEDITATION



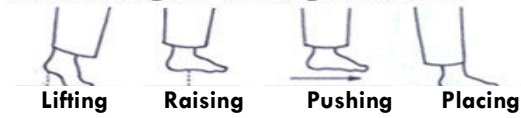
THE 2ND STAGE OF WALKING MEDITATION



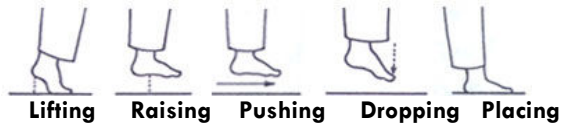
THE 3RD STAGE OF WALKING MEDITATION



THE 4TH STAGE OF WALKING MEDITATION



THE FIFTH STAGE OF WALKING MEDITATION



THE 6TH STAGE OF WALKING MEDITATION



Only when they slow down can they be truly mindful and fully aware of the walking movements. Although meditators pay close attention and slow down, they may not see all stages of the movement of the walking steps clearly. The stages of movements of the steps may not yet be well-defined in the mind, and the different stages of walking movements may appear to be only one continuous movement. As concentration grows stronger, meditators will be able to observe clearly these different stages in one step of walking movement, with at least four stages being easy to distinguish.

With mindful concentration, meditators will distinctly observe that the lifting movement of the foot is not the same as the moving forward movement of the foot; they will further observe that the moving forward movement is not the same movement as the lifting movement or the putting down movement. With deep concentration and while deliberately slowing down the movements of the steps, they will be able to observe all stages of the steps clearly and distinctly. Whatever they are mindful and aware of will be very clear in their minds. As meditators carry on the walking meditation, slowly and mindfully, they will observe much more; in particular; when the foot is lifted, lightness of the foot is experienced; when the foot is pushed forward, movement from one place to another is experienced; when the foot is going down, heaviness will be experienced; when the foot is pressing on the ground, the touching sensation is felt.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS

While observing lifting, moving forward, putting down, and pressing the ground, meditators will also perceive the lightness of the rising foot, the motion of the foot, the heaviness of the descending foot, and then the touching of the foot, which is the hardness or softness of the foot on the ground. ***When meditators perceive these processes, they become aware of the four essential elements: Earth, Water, Fire, and Air. By paying close attention to these four stages of walking meditation, the four elements in their true essence are perceived, not merely as concepts, but as actual processes, as ultimate realities.***

In the first movement, that is, the lifting of the foot, **meditators perceive lightness**, and when they perceive lightness, they virtually perceive the **fire element**. One aspect of the fire element is that of making things lighter, and as things become lighter, they rise. In the perception of the lightness in the upward movement of the foot, meditators perceive the essence of the fire element.

At the same time, in the lifting of the foot there is also, besides lightness, movement. **Movement is one aspect of the air element.** But lightness, the fire element, is dominant, so we can say that in the stage of lifting the fire element is primary, and the air element is secondary. These two elements are perceived by meditators when they pay close attention to the lifting of the foot.

The next stage is moving the foot forward. In moving the foot forward, the dominant element is the air element, because motion is one of the primary characteristics of the air element. So, when they pay close attention to the moving forward of the foot in walking meditation, meditators are virtually perceiving the essence of the **air element**.

The next stage is the movement of putting the foot down. When meditators put their foot down, there is a lingering heaviness in the movement. **Heaviness is a characteristic of the water element, as is trickling and oozing.** When liquid is heavy, as in molasses, it oozes and pours out slowly. So when meditators perceive the heaviness of the foot, they virtually perceive the **water element**.

In pressing the foot on the ground, meditators will perceive the hardness or softness of the foot on the ground. This pertains to the nature of the earth element, hardness or softness. By paying close attention to the pressing of the foot against the ground, meditators virtually perceive the nature of the **earth element**.

Therefore, in just one step, meditators can perceive many processes. They can perceive the four elements and the nature of the four elements. Only those who practise Vipassana Mindfulness will realise these insights. As meditators continue to practise walking meditation, they will come to realise that, with every movement, there is also the noting mind, the awareness of the movement. There is the lifting movement and also the mind that is aware of that lifting. In the next moment, there is the moving forward movement and also the mind that is aware of the movement. Moreover, meditators will realise that both the movement and the awareness arise and disappear in that moment. In the next moment, there is the putting down movement and so also the awareness of the movement, and both arise and disappear in that moment of putting the foot down on the ground. The same process occurs with the pressing of the foot: there is the pressing and the awareness of pressing.

In this way, meditators understand that along with the movement of the foot, there are also the moments of awareness. The moments of awareness, in Pali is **nama; mind**, and the movement of the foot is **rupa; matter**. Meditators will perceive mind and matter rising and disappearing at every moment. At one moment there is the lifting of the foot and the awareness of the lifting, and at the next moment there is the movement forward and the awareness of that movement, and so on. These can be observed as a pair; mind and matter, which arise and disappear at every moment. Therefore, meditators advance to the perception of the dual occurrence of mind and matter at every moment of observing the steps in motion.

Another thing that meditators will discover is the role of intention in effecting each movement. They will realise that they lift their foot because they want to, move the foot forward because they want to, put it down because they want to, press the foot against the ground because they want to. That is, they realise that an intention precedes every movement. After the intention to lift, lifting occurs. They come to understand the conditionality of all of these occurrences; these movements never occur by themselves, without conditions. These movements are not created by any deity or any authority, and these movements never happen without a cause. **There is a cause or condition for every movement, and that condition is the intention preceding each movement. This is another discovery meditators make when they pay close attention while walking at a slow, mindful pace.** When meditators realise the conditionality of all movements, and that these movements are not created by any authority or any god, then they will know that these movements are caused by intention. They will realise that intention is the condition for the movements to occur. By this contemplation, the relationship of conditioning and conditioned, of cause and effect, is seen directly and realised by the meditators. On the basis of this realisation, meditators can remove doubt about nama and rupa and that nama and rupa do not arise without conditions.

With the clear realisation of the conditionality of things, and with the transcendence of doubt about nama and rupa, a meditator is said to reach the stage of a "lesser sotapanna." A "lesser sotapanna" is not a true stream-enterer but is said to be assured of rebirth in a happy realm of existence, such as in the realms of human beings and devas.

That is, a lesser sotapanna is able to escape rebirth in one of the four woeful states, in one of the hells or animal realms. ***This state of lesser sotapanna can be reached just by practising walking meditation, just by paying close attention to the movements involved in a step.*** This is the great benefit of practising walking meditation. This stage is not easily attainable, but once meditators reach it, they can be assured that they will be reborn in a happy state, unless, of course, they fall from that stage.

When meditators realise mind and matter arise and disappear at every moment, they also realise the impermanence of the processes of lifting the foot, as well as the impermanence of the awareness of that lifting. The occurrence of disappearing after arising is a characteristic of impermanence. It is only through Vipassana meditation that we can observe and realise this particular characteristic of any phenomenon and it is by such realisation that we can see the impermanence of that phenomenon.

If our meditation is advanced enough it will enable us to see the arising and disappearing of phenomena, thereby coming to the conclusion that the phenomena observed are impermanent. In this way, meditators observe directly by themselves that there is the lifting movement and awareness of that movement; then that sequence disappears, giving way to the pushing forward movement and the awareness of pushing forward. These movements arise and disappear. This process is observed by meditators through direct knowledge; they did not receive this knowledge from any external source. When meditators observe mind and matter arise and disappear, they realise that mind and matter are impermanent and are unsatisfactory due to their constant arising and disappearing. Contemplating on the impermanence and the unsatisfactory nature of all phenomena, meditators realise that there can be no mastery over these things; that there is no self or soul within that can order them to be permanent. They know that phenomena arise and disappear according to conditions. By this realisation, meditators also realise the third characteristic of conditioned phenomena, the characteristic of anatta; that phenomena are not souls or selves; that they arise and disappear due to conditions.

Hence, by practising walking meditation, meditators have realised the three characteristics of all conditioned phenomena: impermanence, suffering, and their non-self nature.

Now let us examine in more detail the movements of walking meditation. Suppose one were to take a moving picture of the lifting of the foot. Suppose further that the lifting of the foot takes one second, and let us say that the camera can take thirty-six frames per second. After taking the picture, if we were to look at the separate frames, we would realise that within what we thought was one lifting movement, there are actually thirty-six movements. The image in each frame is slightly different from the images in the preceding frames, though the difference will usually be so slight that we can barely notice it. If the camera could take one thousand frames per second, then there would be one thousand movements in just one lifting movement, although the movements would be almost impossible to differentiate. If the camera could take one million frames per second, which may be impossible now, but someday may happen, then there would be one million movements in what we thought to be only one movement. ***Walking meditation allows us to see our movements as closely as the camera sees them, frame by frame and to observe the awareness and intention preceding each movement.***

Before meditators begin practising walking meditation, they may have thought that a step is just one movement. After meditation on that movement, they observe that there are at least four movements, and if they go deeper, they will understand that even one of these four movements consists of millions of tiny movements. ***They see Mind and Matter (nama and rupa) Rising and Disappearing, as Impermanent.***

Under normal circumstances, we are not able to see the impermanence of things because impermanence is hidden by the illusion of continuity. We think that we see only one continuous movement, but if we look closely we will see that the ***illusion of continuity can be broken***. It can be broken by the direct observation of physical phenomena bit by bit, segment by segment, as they originate and disintegrate. ***Hence; the true value of meditation is to render us the ability to remove the cloak of continuity in order to discover the real nature of Impermanence. Meditators can discover the nature of impermanence directly through their own effort.***

On realising that things are composed of segments, that they occur in bits, and after observing these segments one by one, meditators will realise that there is really nothing in this world to be attached to, nothing to crave for.

When we see that something which we once thought beautiful has holes, that it is decaying and disintegrating, we will be disillusioned. For example, we may see a beautiful painting on a canvas. We think of the paint and canvas conceptually as a whole, solid thing. But if we were to put the painting under a powerful microscope, we would see that the picture is not solid; it has many holes and spaces. After seeing the picture as composed largely of spaces, we would lose interest in it and we would cease being attached to it. Physicists have observed, with powerful instruments, that matter is just a vibration of particles and energy constantly changing; there is nothing substantial to it at all. By the realisation of this endless impermanence, meditators understand that there is really nothing to crave for, nothing to hold on to in the entire world of phenomena.

It is by comprehending the three characteristics of existence; impermanence, suffering and the non-self nature of things; that we remove craving.

If we do not want to suffer continuous rebirths in samsara, a place of suffering, we must remove craving and attachment. We must comprehend that all things are just mind and matter arising and disappearing, that things are insubstantial. Once we realise this, we will be able to remove attachment to things. As long as we do not realise this, however much we read books or attend talks or talk about removing attachment, we will not be able to get rid of attachment. It is necessary to have the direct experience that all conditioned things are marked by the three characteristics.

Hence we must pay close attention when we are walking. Walking meditation is conducive to spiritual development. It is as powerful as mindfulness of breathing or mindfulness of the rising and falling of the abdomen. It is an efficient tool to help us remove mental defilement. Walking meditation can help us gain insight into the nature of things, and we should practise it as diligently as we practise sitting meditation or any other kind of meditation.

BOOK III
VIPASSANA JHANAS
Sayadaw U. Pandita Bhivamsa

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wisdom Soften the Mind	90
Blowing Out Suffering	91
The Sensing Process with and without Mindfulness	91
Jhana	92
The Five Jhanic Factors	93
Threefold Seclusion	94
The Relationship of Vitakka and Vicara	96
The Five Hindrances	98
Comprehending the Nature of the World	100
Verified Knowledge by Comprehension	104
The Fullfilment of the First Vipassana Jhana	105
Wholesome and Unwholesome Vitaka	105
Vicara as Reflective Knowledge	106
The Second Vipassana Jhana	106
The Danger of Faith, Rapture and Happiness	107
The Arising of the Third Vipassana Jhana	108
The Climax of Happiness	108
Dissolution of Phenomena	108
The Appearance of the Fourth Vipassana Jhana	109
Summary of the Four Vipassana Jhanas	110

VIPASSANA JHANA Sayadaw U. Pandita Bhivamsa

WISDOM SOFTENS THE MIND (An Excerpt)

Right Effort, Right Aim, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration: all these are factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. When they are present in the mind, the defilement (kilesa) have no



chance to arise. The defilement, which hardens the mind, causing it to be rigid and agitated, are dispelled when one is with the moment, and so the mind has a chance to soften. With continuous noting the mind gradually becomes more able to penetrate into the true nature of things. There comes the insight that everything is but just ***Mind and Matter***, and the mind experiences a huge sense of relief. ***No one is there, just mind and matter, with no one creating them.*** If we can further see

how these phenomena are conditioned, the mind will be free of doubts. A meditator whose mind is full of doubts, rigid, tough and tense is difficult to teach and work with. If such a meditator can be persuaded to practise at least enough to gain insight into cause and effect, there will be no more problem. This insight clears the mind of doubt and makes it soft. The meditator will no longer wonder whether these phenomena of Mind and Matter might be created by some external force, another being, invisible or supreme.

As one becomes more profoundly aware of the moment, the mind becomes softer and more relaxed as the hold of defilement loosens. Hence, while observing the fleeting nature of Mental and Physical Phenomena, one gains insight into their impermanence. As a direct consequence of this process, one is freed from pride and conceit. If one sees clearly the tremendous stress brought about by phenomena, one gains insight into their dis-ease and suffering nature and is freed from cravings. If one sees the absence of self in all phenomena, realising that the process of Mind and Matter is empty and not at all related to one's wishes, one can be freed from the wrong view that there is some permanent entity called the 'self'. This is only the beginning; the more profound one penetrates into the true nature of reality, the more one's mind becomes flexible, pliable, workable and dextrous. If one attains the first path consciousness, the first experience of Nibbana, some defilement will never make the mind tense and rigid again.

BLOWING OUT SUFFERING

The Blessed One said: ***“One should not allow the mind to wander without, neither should one allow the mind to stop within. One who is able to be mindful in that way will eventually be able to extinguish all sufferings.”*** If the mind comes into contact with a pleasant, desirable, tempting object, it is naturally filled with greed. This is the moment we say it has wandered off. When it touches a disgusting, painful object, it is filled with aversion. Again it becomes a wandering mind. The mind veiled in delusion, unable to see what is happening, is also a mind that has run away.

THE SENSING PROCESS WITH AND WITHOUT MINDFULNESS

All the sensing processes occur through a series of consciousness which are neither wholesome nor unwholesome. Immediately after this series, however, if mindfulness does not intervene, there will occur a second and perhaps a third or fourth series of consciousness accompanied by greed, hatred and delusion. Vipassana practice sharpens mindfulness until it can catch the bare sensing process at the end of the amoral series of consciousnesses and forestall the arising of further series accompanied by greed, hatred and delusion. If a mind can make this interception, we say that it is not wandering. The wandering mind is the mind that has been defiled as it reflects on what has happened or what is happening. Practically speaking, if we begin to reflect upon the characteristics of the object; “Oh what a gorgeous colour”; we know the mind has wandered off.

If, on the other hand, we activate precise and penetrative mindfulness and diligent effort at the moment of seeing that coloured object, we have the chance to understand the seeing process for what it really is. This is the chance to develop wisdom. We can see the relationship of mind to matter, the conditionality that relates them, and the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and absence of self they share.

If the mind makes an effort to be precisely aware of the rise and fall of the abdomen, actually to feel them from beginning to end, it will be freed from greed, hatred and delusion. There are neither thoughts of pleasurable objects, nor aversion to unpleasant objects, nor deluded confusion about what is going on. The mind has not wandered away. If the mind leaves the rising and falling and attends to and reflect on any sound or sight it can be said that the mind has wandered away.

JHANA

There are yet deeper aspects of not wandering. The mind that is not wandering is the mind that is penetratively mindful of what is happening. The word 'penetrative' is not used casually. It refers to a mental factor that must arise in the mind. This is a jhanic factor. Jhana is usually translated as 'absorption' and refers to the quality of mind that is able to stick to an object and observe it. It is like shooting an arrow straight into the centre of a target. There are two types of jhana, **Samatha and Vipassana Jhana.**

Samatha jhana is pure concentration, fixed awareness of a single object; a mental image. The mind is fixed on this object without wavering or moving elsewhere. Eventually the mind develops a very peaceful, tranquil, concentrated state and becomes absorbed in the object. Different levels of absorption are described in the texts, each having specific qualities.

Conversely, Vipassana jhana allows the mind to move freely from object to object, staying focussed on the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and absence of self that are common to all objects. Vipassana jhana also includes the mind which can stay focussed and fixed upon the bliss of Nibbana. Rather than the tranquillity and absorption which are the goal of samatha jhana practitioners, the most important results of Vipassana jhana are insight and wisdom.

Vipassana jhana is the focussing of the mind on 'ultimate realities', the things we can experience directly through the six sense doors without conceptualisation; such as mental and physical phenomena which are changing all the time. Nibbana is also an ultimate reality, but it is not conditioned. Breathing is a good example of conditioned process. The sensations you feel at the abdomen are conditioned ultimate realities, caused by your intention to breathe. The whole purpose of concentrating one's attention on the abdomen is to penetrate the actual quality and nature of what is happening there. ***When you are aware of movement, tension, tautness, heat or cold, you have begun to develop Vipassana jhana.*** Mindfulness at the respective sense doors follows the same principle. If there is diligent effort and penetrative awareness, focussing on what is happening in any particular sense process, the mind will understand the true nature of what is happening. These sensing processes will be understood in individual characteristics as well as common ones.

THE FIVE JHANIC FACTORS

In the four levels of jhana, the first jhana possesses five factors which we will describe below. All of them are important in Vipassana practice. The first of them is called **vitakka**. It is the factor of aiming accurately directing the mind towards an object. It also has the aspect of establishing the mind on the object, so that the mind stays there.

The second factor is **vicara**, 'investigation' or 'reflection'. After vitakka has brought the mind to the object and placed it firmly there, vicara continues to rub the mind onto the object. You can experience this yourself when observing rising and falling. First you make the effort to be precise in aiming the mind at the rising process. Then your mind reaches the object and it does not slip off. It impinges on the object, rubs against it. As you are mindful in an intuitive and accurate way from moment to moment, the mind gets more and more pure. The hindrances of desire, aversion, sloth, restlessness and doubt weaken and disappear. The mind becomes crystal clear and calm. This state of clarity results from the presence of the two jhanic factors we just discussed. It is called *viveka*, which means seclusion. The consciousness is secluded, far away from the hindrances. This *viveka* is not a jhanic factor. It is merely a descriptive term for this secluded state of consciousness.

The third jhanic factor is **piti**, rapture, a delighted interest in what is occurring. This factor may manifest physically as gooseflesh, as feelings of being dropped suddenly as if in an elevator, or as feelings of rising off the ground.

The fourth jhanic factor, **sukha**, happiness or comfort, comes on the heels of the third. One feels very satisfied with the practice. Both the third and fourth jhanic factors come about as a result of seclusion from the hindrances, and is a state of rapture, joy and happiness born out of seclusion.

Think of this sequence as a causal chain. Seclusion of mind comes about because of the presence of the first two jhanic factors. If the mind is accurately aimed at the object, if it hits and rubs it, after some time the mind will become secluded. Because this mind is secluded from the hindrances, one becomes happy, joyous and comfortable. When these first four jhanic factors are present, the mind automatically becomes calm and peaceful, able to concentrate on what is happening without getting scattered or dispersed. This one-pointedness of mind is the fifth jhanic factor; **samadhi** or concentration.

Access to the first Vipassana jhana requires insight into mind and matter. It is not sufficient to have all five factors present for one to say one has attained the first Vipassana jhana. The mind must also come to penetrate into the Dhamma **enough to realise the inter-relationship of mind and matter. At this time we say that access to the first Vipassana jhana has occurred.** A meditator whose mind is composed of these five jhanic factors will experience a new accuracy of mindfulness, a new level of success in sticking with the object. Intense rapture, happiness and comfort in the body may also arise. This could be the occasion for him or her to gloat over the wondrousness of the meditation practice. “Oh, I’m getting really precise and accurate. I even feel like I’m floating in the air!” **You might recognise this reflection as a moment of attachment.** Anyone can get caught up in rapture, happiness and comfort. This attachment to what is happening within us is a manifestation of a special kind of craving, a craving not connected with ordinary, worldly sensual pleasures. Rather, such a craving comes directly out of one’s meditation practice. When one is unable to be aware of this craving when it arises, it will interfere with one’s practice. Rather than directly noting, one wallows in the pleasant phenomena unmindfully, or thinks about further delights that might ensue from one’s practice. This is attachment to the pleasant results of meditation and is known as stopping within.

THREEFOLD SECLUSION

During meditation, one should avoid contact with sensual pleasures and with unwholesome dhammas by practising the threefold seclusion of:

(1) Seclusion of the body (**kaya viveka**); (2) Seclusion of the mind (**citta viveka**) and as a result of the first two; (3) a state where defilement and hindrances are very far away and weak (**vikkhambhana viveka**).

Seclusion of the body actually refers to seclusion not from a physical body, but from the ‘body’ of objects related to sensual pleasures. This means simply the objects of the senses considered as a group: sounds, visual objects, smells, tastes and tactile objects.

Seclusion from unwholesome dhammas comes under the category of **Seclusion of the Mind** from the various hindrances which obstruct the growth of concentration and insight. In a practical way, Seclusion of the Mind simply means activating mindfulness moment to moment. A meditator who can maintain continuity of mindfulness moment to moment has activated Seclusion of the Mind.

These two types of Seclusions do not come without an effort. For seclusion of the body, we must remove ourselves from an environment of sensual pleasures, taking the opportunity to practise in a place conducive to peace of mind. This removal is not in itself sufficient, of course.

To acquire seclusion of the mind, we become mindful of all objects that arise at the six sense doors. ***One must direct the mind towards an object. The effort to be mindful is instrumental in bringing a sense of accuracy in the mind. This aim, this effort toward accuracy in placing the mind squarely on the meditation object is the first jhanic factor; vitakka. So, we must have aiming. You try to observe the rising and falling of the abdomen. Eventually the mind hits the bull's-eye, clearly noticing sensations of hardness, tension, movements. It begins to impinge and rub against the object. This is vicara.***

After the mind has been rubbing against its object for some time, it will become engrossed and absorbed into it. When you stay with the rise and fall of the abdomen, fewer thoughts arise. You may even go for some time without having a single thought. Clearly, the mind is free from objects of sense pleasure and also from defilement (kilesa) which are caused by these objects.

Seclusion of the body (kaya viveka) and seclusion of the mind (citta viveka) are therefore present. With continued practice, effort and continuity, the defilement will fade into extreme remoteness. At last you have the third type of seclusion, a state where defilement and hindrances are very far away and weak; vikkhambhana viveka.

With a state where defilement and hindrances are very far away and weak (vikkhambhana viveka), the mind becomes soft and subtle, light and buoyant, dextrous and flexible; a special kind of happiness, **nekkhamma sukha** arises, the happiness and comfort that come from being free from sensual objects as well as from the unwholesome defilement which react to those objects. So, in place of ordinary apparent happiness, this liberating comfort appears. In relinquishing the comfort of the senses, one gains a very comfortable state of being liberated from the very senses we have relinquished. This is the true renunciation of sense pleasures.

Seclusion of the mind from unwholesome dhammas actually means seclusion of the mind from all defilement. There is no opportunity for defilement to arise because the immediate cause of defilement, namely sense objects, have been given up. Now the word jhana, the state of being absorbed, takes on a whole new meaning. As a result of other jhanic factors of vitakka (aim) and vicara (rubbing); sensual pleasures have been given up and the defilement put away. Not only does jhana allow absorption, but it also removes defilement like fire burning them away.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF VITAKKA AND VICARA

In the development of jhanic states, these two factors, vitakka and vicara are absolutely important. They have a close relationship. Here are two examples. Imagine that you have a brass cup that is covered with dirt and stains. You take brass polish and put it on a rag. Holding the cup in one hand, you use the other hand to rub the rag against its surface. Working diligently and carefully, soon you will have a shiny cup. In the same way, a meditator must hold his or her mind in the particular place where the primary object is occurring, the abdomen. He or she keeps applying mindfulness at that place, rubbing it until the stains and pollution of the kilesa disappear. Then he or she will be able to penetrate into the true nature of what is happening at that spot. He or she will comprehend the process of rising and falling. Of course, when other objects are more prominent than the primary object, a meditator must note them, applying vitakka and vicara toward the new phenomena.

Holding the mug with one hand is analogous to vitakka, while the polishing action is analogous to vicara. Imagine what would happen if this meditator only held on to the mug and did not polish it. It would remain as dirty as before. If he or she tried to polish it without holding it steadily, it would again be impossible to do a good job. This illustrates the interdependency of the two factors. The second example is that of a compass, the kind used in geometry. As you know, a compass has two arms, a pointed one and another which holds the pencil. You must firmly place your mind on the object of meditation, as if your mind were the pointed end of the compass; and then you must rotate the mind, so to speak, until it can see the object as a whole and very clearly. A perfect circle will result. Again, the placing of the pointed end is analogous to vitakka, and the rotation to vicara.

Vicara is translated as 'investigation' or 'sustained thought', which is to say, to apply intellect to seek the whys and wherefores. Unfortunately, this kind of investigation is inappropriate for meditation. Intellectual learning and knowledge is only one of two kinds. The other means of knowledge and learning is direct and intuitive. ***In meditation one examines the ultimate realities or paramattha dhammas, directly. One must actually experience them, without thinking about them. This is the only way to attain insight and wisdom relating to things as they really are, the natural state of affairs.*** One may understand a lot intellectually about ultimate reality. One may have read a great deal, but without experiencing reality directly, there can be no insight. The reason why the samatha jhanas can grant tranquillity, but do not lead directly to wisdom is that they have concepts as their objects, rather than objects which can be directly experienced without thinking. ***Vipassana jhanas lead to wisdom, because they consist of direct, sustained contact with ultimate realities.*** Thinking about the taste of an apple is insufficient to know the taste itself. One can think all one wants, but until one takes a bite of the apple one will not experience the taste of that fruit. So too, with meditation; one may vividly imagine what a certain experience is like, but one have not experienced the real thing until one have actually made the effort to practise correctly.

The darkness of delusion and ignorance arises in the human mind when it is not properly attuned to the object of meditation. This darkness is not empty and uneventful, though. On the contrary, in each moment of ignorance the mind is continually seeking and grasping after desirable sights, sounds, thoughts, smells, tastes and sensations. Beings in this condition spend all their waking hours seeking, grasping and clinging. They are so enmeshed that it is difficult for them to appreciate the possibility of another sort of happiness beyond those sensual pleasures which are so familiar. Meditation, the practical method of achieving a higher happiness, will be unintelligible to them. Vipassana practice is a full and continuous attention to the object. This involves two aspects of concentration, vitakka and vicara: aiming and rubbing. These two jhanic factors keep the mind absorbed in the object of noting. If they are absent, the mind will stray. Bombarded by sense objects and defilement, especially the defilement of longing for sensual objects, the mind will be engulfed by delusion and ignorance. There will be no light, no chance for the remaining three jhanic factors to assemble with the first two to create the environment of peace, clarity and joy where insight blossoms.

THE FIVE HINDRANCES

The five specific ways in which the mind strays from its object are called the Five Hindrances. Of the seemingly endless variety of defilement (kilesa), the hindrances represent the five major types. They are 'hindrances' because each of them has a particular power to obstruct and impede our practice. As long as the mind is seduced by temptations of the senses, it cannot remain steadily observing a meditation object. Drawn away time and again, it will never travel that path of practice which leads beyond ordinary happiness.

Sensual Desire is the first and greatest hindrance to our practice.

For an object to be distracting in an unpleasant way is another frequent occurrence. Upon contact with an unpleasant object, the mind fills with **Aversion or Anger**. This too leads the mind away from the object and so also away from the direction of true happiness.

At other times alertness and vigilance vanish. The mind becomes drowsy, unworkable and sluggish. Once again, it cannot stay with the object. This is **Sloth and Torpor**, third on the list of hindrances.

Sometimes the mind becomes very frivolous and dissipated, flirting with one object and then another. This is **Restlessness and Agitation**. The mind cannot stay one-pointed on its object but is scattered and dissipated, full of memories of past deeds, remorse and regret, worry and agitation.

The fifth and last major hindrance is **Sceptical Doubt and Criticism**. Surely you have experienced times when you have doubted yourself, the method of practice or your teachers. You may compare this practice to others you have done or heard about, and you become completely paralysed, like a traveller at a crossroad who, unsure of the right way, cannot decide which path to take.

The presence of hindrances means that rapture, comfort, one-pointedness of mind, right aim and continuity are lacking. These five wholesome factors are the factors of the first jhana; they are integral parts of successful Vipassana practice. Each jhanic factor is the antidote for a specific hindrance and each hindrance is the enemy of a jhanic factor.

Concentration: The Antidote for Sense Desire

The hindrance of sense desire is chiefly responsible for keeping us in darkness. Concentration, one-pointedness is its antidote. When your mind is concentrated on the object of meditation, it does not attach itself to other thoughts, nor does it desire pleasant sights and sounds. Pleasurable objects lose their power over the mind. Dispersion and dissipation cannot occur.

Rapture: The Antidote for Aversion

As concentration takes the mind to more levels, deep interest arises. Rapture and joy fill one's being which frees the mind from the second hindrance, for anger cannot co-exist with joy. Hence, joy and rapture are the antidotes to anger.

Happiness or Comfort: The Antidote for Restlessness

When meditation is well developed, a great sense of comfort arises. The mind observes unpleasant sensations peacefully, without aversion. There is ease in the mind, even if the objects are difficult. Sometimes pain even disappears under the influence of mindfulness, leaving behind a sense of physical release. With this physical and mental comfort, the mind is content to remain with the object. It does not fly about. Comfort is the antidote for restlessness and anxiety.

Aim: The Antidote for Sloth and Torpor

Aim has the specific power to open and refresh the mind. It makes the mind alive and open. Hence, when the mind is continually and diligently trying to be accurate in aiming at the object, sloth and torpor do not arise. A mind attacked by drowsiness is a mind that has been constricted and withered. *Vitakka* is the antidote to sloth and torpor.

Continuous Attention or Rubbing: The Antidote for Doubt

If aim is good, it follows that the mind will hit its target of observation. This impinging or rubbing against the object is the jhanic factor of *vicara*, which has the function of continuity, keeping the mind stuck to its object of observation. Continuous attention is the opposite of doubt, for doubt is indecision. The doubting mind cannot fix itself on any particular object; instead it runs here and there considering possibilities. Obviously, when *vicara* is present the mind cannot slip from the object and behave in this manner. **Immature wisdom** also contributes to the spreading of doubt. Without a certain depth and maturity of practice, profound Dhamma will be obscure.

Some beginning meditators tend to wonder about things they have heard about but never experienced; the more they try to think and analyse such things through, the less they will understand; they will be confused. Frustration and continued thinking eventually lead to criticism. For this vicious cycle, continuous attention is again the antidote. A mind firmly stuck to its object uses all its power to observe; it does not generate critical thoughts.

COMPREHENDING THE NATURE OF THIS WORLD

When you can keep your attention on the rising and falling from the very beginning of its occurrence to the very end, developing that penetrative, accurate mindfulness from moment to moment in an unbroken and continuous manner, then you may come to notice that you can see clearly with your mind's eye the entire rising process. From its beginning, through the middle, to the end, there is not a single gap. The experience is utterly clear to you. You now begin to move through the progression of insights that is only available through **Vipassana meditation, direct observation of mind and body. First you make the subtle distinction between the mental and physical elements constituting the rising and falling processes. Sensations are material objects, distinct from the consciousness that perceives them. As you observe diligently, you begin to see how mind and matter are mutually connected, causally linked. An intention in the mind causes the appearance of a series of physical objects constituting a movement. Your mind starts to appreciate how mind and matter come into being and disappear. The fact of arising and disappearing comes into crystal clear focus. It becomes obvious that all objects in your field of consciousness have the nature to come and go. Sounds begin and then end. Sensations in the body arise and then dissolve; nothing lasts.** At this point in practice, there begin to be a strong presence of all five factors of the first jhana, discussed above. **Aiming and impinging, vitakka and vicara,** have strengthened. **Concentration, rapture and comfort** join them. The first **Vipassana jhana** is said to be complete, and Vipassana-nana or Vipassana insight knowledge begin to arise. Vipassana insight knowledge is concerned specifically with the three general characteristics of conditioned phenomena: **Impermanence** (anicca); **Unsatisfactoriness or Suffering** (dukkha); And **Absence of an Abiding Self** (anatta).

1 - IMPERMANENCE (anicca):

As you watch objects come and go, **you will begin to appreciate their momentary nature, their impermanence.** This knowledge of impermanence is direct, first hand; you feel its truth anywhere you place your attention. During the moment your mind is in contact with the object, you see clearly how the object dissolves. A great sense of satisfaction arises. You feel a deep interest in your meditation, and rejoice at having discovered this fact and truth about the universe. Even simple and general observation tells us that the whole body is impermanent. Impermanence or *anicca* refers to the whole body. Looking closer, we see that all phenomena which occur at the six sense doors are impermanent; they are impermanent things. We can also understand impermanence to mean all the impermanent things comprising mind and matter, mental and physical phenomena. There is no object we can find in this conditioned world that is not impermanent (*anicca*). **The fact of rising and falling away is the characteristic or sign of impermanence (*anicca lakkhana*). It is precisely in the arising and passing away that impermanence can be recognised.**

Vipassana Knowledge of Impermanence is the intuitive comprehension which realises the fact of impermanence; it occurs in the very moment of noting a particular object and watching it disappear. It is important to make this point, that **Vipassana Knowledge of Impermanence (*anicca Vipassana nana*)** can only occur in the precise moment when one sees the passing away of a phenomenon. In the absence of such immediate seeing, it is impossible to understand impermanence. **True insight only occurs in the presence of a non-thinking, bare awareness of the passing away of phenomena in the present moment.** In the moment of rising, you may be aware of tautness, tenseness, expansion and movement. If you can follow the rising process from beginning to end, and the ending of these sensations is clear to you, it is possible for Vipassana knowledge of impermanence (*anicca Vipassana nana*) to occur. All sensations that can be felt at the abdomen or anywhere else are impermanent things (*anicca*). Their characteristics of having appeared at the beginning of the rising process and having disappeared at the end, constitute characteristic of impermanence (*anicca lakkhana*). The realisation that they are impermanent can only occur in a moment when one is observing their disappearance.

Impermanence can be observed in seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, thinking, touching; all the sensations of the body, heat and cold and hardness and pain; and all of one's miscellaneous activities; bending, turning, reaching out, walking; all these things are impermanent. If you can see the vanishing of any of these objects, you will be involved in Vipassana knowledge of impermanence (*anicca Vipassana nana*). You will lose the illusion of permanence. Conceit (*mana*) will also be absent. In fact, during times when you are mindfully aware of impermanence, your general level of conceit will progressively diminish.

2 - SUFFERING OR UNSATISFACTORINESS: (Dukkha)

The second characteristic of conditioned reality is suffering or dukkha. During your observation of impermanence, very naturally the factor of unsatisfactoriness and or suffering will also become apparent as phenomena arise and pass away. You will realise that nothing is dependable and there is nothing fixed to cling to. Everything is in changing all the time. Phenomena provide no refuge. Suffering itself is synonymous for impermanence, referring to all impermanent things.

At this point of development in the practice, painful sensations can become very interesting. One can observe them for some time without reacting. One sees that they are not solid at all; they do not actually last more than the briefest instant. The illusion of continuity begins to crumble. A pain in the back: one sees fiery heat transform itself into pressure, and then into throbbing. The throbbing changes its texture, its shape and intensity moment by moment. Finally, a climax occurs. The mind is able to see the break-up and disintegration of that pain. Pain vanishes from the field of consciousness. Observing the pain disappearing, one is filled with joy and exhilaration. The body feels cool, calm, comfortable, yet one is not deluded into thinking that suffering has been abolished. The satisfying nature of sensations becomes clearer. One begins to see this body as a mass of painful and unsatisfactory phenomena. The characteristic of suffering is stress by impermanence. Precisely because all objects arise and pass away from moment to moment, we live in a highly stressful situation. Once arising has occurred, there is no way to prevent passing away.

Vipassana knowledge of suffering, the insight that comprehends suffering, also occurs at the moment when one is contemplating the passing away of phenomena. However, it has a different flavour from Vipassana knowledge of impermanence. One is suddenly seized by a great realisation that none of these objects is dependable.

There is no refuge in them; they are fearsome things. Again it is important to understand that the appreciation of suffering we gain through reading books, or through our own reasoning and reflection, does not constitute the real thing. Vipassana knowledge of suffering only occurs when the mind is present with bare awareness, watching the arising and passing away of phenomena and understanding that their impermanence is fearful, fearsome, undesirable and bad. ***The true realisation that suffering is inherent in all phenomena can be very powerful. It eliminates the deluded view that these things are pleasurable. When such an illusion vanishes, craving cannot arise.***

3 - ABSENCE OF AN ABIDING SELF (anatta):

In view of this, one appreciates that no 'entity' or a 'self' (**anatta**) is behind these processes; only moment to moment phenomena arises; this is a natural process with which a 'self', is not identified. This wisdom relating to the absence of a 'self' in things; **Vipassana knowledge of selflessness** (anatta Vipassana nana), is also based on two preceding aspects, selflessness (anatta) and characteristic of selflessness (anatta lakkhana).

Selflessness (anatta) refers to all impermanent phenomena which possess no self-essence; in other words, every single element of mind and matter. The only difference from **impermanence** (anicca) and **suffering** (dukkha) is that a different aspect, the third characteristic of existence, **selflessness**, is being highlighted. The characteristic of selflessness (anatta), sign of selflessness (anatta lakkhana), is seeing that an object does not arise or pass away according to one's wishes. All the mental and physical phenomena that occur in us come and go of their own accord, responding to their own natural laws. Their occurrence is beyond our control. We can see this in a general way by observing the weather. At times it is extremely hot, at other times freezing cold. At times it is wet, at other times dry. Some climates are fickle, such that one does not know what will happen next. In no way can one adjust the temperature to suit one's comfort. Weather is subject to its own natural laws, just like the elements that constitute our minds and bodies. When we fall ill, suffer and eventually die.

While diligently observing and noting all the mental and physical phenomena arising and passing away within, one may be struck by the fact that no one is in control of the process. Such an insight comes quite naturally. It is not affected or manipulated in any way. Nor does it come from reflection.

It simply occurs when one is present, observing the passing away of phenomena. This is Vipassana knowledge of selflessness or **anatta Vipassana nana**. When one is unable to see the momentary arising and passing away of phenomena, one is easily misled to think that there is a self, an individual unchanging entity behind the process of body and mind. With clear awareness, this false view is momentarily eliminated.

**VERIFIED KNOWLEDGE BY COMPREHENSION:
THE FULFILLMENT OF THE FIRST VIPASSANA JHANA**

When awareness is clear, especially when the passing away of things is noticeable, one can appreciate intuitively the characteristics of impermanence, of suffering, or of absence of self that are inherent in all phenomena. The intuitive understanding of all three of these characteristics is included in a particular stage of insight, '**Verified Knowledge by Comprehension**' (**sammasana-nana**), meaning the insight that arises out of verification. One comprehends or verifies the three characteristics through personal experience of seeing the disappearance of phenomena.

Though it is very commonly used, the word 'insight' may not be an appropriate translation of the Pali word Vipassana. The word has two parts, 'vi' and 'passana'. 'Vi' refers to various modes and 'passana' is seeing. Therefore, one meaning of Vipassana is 'seeing through various modes'. These various modes, of course are those of impermanence, suffering and absence of self. A more complete translation now becomes 'seeing through the modes of impermanence, suffering and absence of self'. Another synonym for Vipassana insight is pacceka-nana. Pacceka here refers to direct experiential perception. True Vipassana insight only arises when one is mindful, as it occurs intuitively rather than from reasoning, it is called a direct experiential insight, pacceka-nana.

With heightened Vipassana insight as one's practice intensifies, the mind is led into a natural and spontaneous reflection that impermanence, suffering and non-selfness are not only manifest in the present situation; one realises by deduction that these three qualities have also manifested throughout the past and will continue to prevail in the future. Other beings and objects are constituted of the same elements as oneself, all impermanent, unsatisfactory and empty of self. This reflection is called deductive knowledge, and it is a further aspect of the jhanic factors of vitakka and vicara, manifesting in this case on the thinking level.

At this stage the first Vipassana jhana is considered to be fully developed and the stage of practice called '**Verified Knowledge by Comprehension**' (**sammasana-nana**) is fulfilled. One has a deep and clear appreciation of the three general characteristics of conditioned phenomena: anicca, dukkha and anatta. **One has reached the deductive conclusion that in this world there never has been, or will there ever be, a situation that is not pervaded by these three aspects. Deductions and reflections tend to be present in the first Vipassana jhana. They are harmless unless they begin to take over one's mind, especially in a person who is highly intellectual, who has a vivid imagination or is philosophically bent, too much reflection can get in the way of personal and direct experience. It can actually put a stop to insight.** If one has this tendency and finds one's practice undermined, one can console oneself with the knowledge that this is not wrong thinking. In this instance, reflection is connected with the Dhamma rather than with greed or aversion. Despite this fact, of course, **one should make the effort to return to bare observation, simply experiencing phenomena.**

WHOLESOME AND UNWHOLESOME VITAKKA

The word vitakka, used for the jhanic factor of accurate aim, includes this reflection on a thinking level, directing one's attention toward a thought. There are wholesome and unwholesome kinds of vitakka. Directing one's attention toward sense pleasure is said to be unwholesome vitakka. It may be directed to cruel thought. A cruel thought contains the desire to harm, oppress, torture or torment or kill other beings. It is another very destructive quality of the mind rooted in hatred. Its wholesome counterpart is vitakka connected with renunciation. Vitakka connected with aversion and aggression is unwholesome. Vitakka connected with non-aversion and with non-violence is wholesome. When deductive knowledge of anicca, dukkha and anatta arises as explained above, the vitakka connected with sensual pleasures is absent. In the series of thoughts that come out of direct personal insight, some desire may be present, but it probably will not be concerned with the pleasures of this world; fame, sex, wealth, property. More likely one will feel a very wholesome desire to renounce the world or to be generous to spread the Dhamma. Though these thoughts constitute vitakka or reflection, they are connected with non-greed or renunciation. Vitakka connected with anger is an aggressive state of mind, in which one desires that another person suffer harm and misfortune. Rooted in anger, it has a destructive quality behind it.

Non-aversion or non-hatred refers to the lovely quality of metta, loving kindness. In contrast to the aggressive, destructive quality of hatred, metta wishes the welfare and happiness of others. When one has tasted the flavour of the Dhamma through personal experiences as mentioned above, it is not unusual to want to share it with loved ones. You want others to have the same experience. This kind of thought is connected with metta, for it wishes the well-being of others. It also has the quality of compassion or *karuna*, wanting to help others and to relieve them of any suffering or distress they may feel. One who has strong compassion will not only feel it emotionally, but will also seek ways and means to relieve the sufferings of others.

VICARA AS REFLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

If such reflective thoughts recur again and again, this process takes the name of vicara. This is the same word used for the more sustained, rubbing aspect of focussed attention. Here it means repeated reflection on the thinking level. First one experiences a direct intuitive insight; and afterwards, deductive knowledge arises concerning the insight. Deductive knowledge is spicy and enjoyable, but in excess it develops into long trains of thoughts which interrupt the process of direct observation. These may be very noble thoughts; of renunciation, metta and compassion, but nonetheless one is caught by them and carried away. At this time insight cannot occur.

THE SECOND VIPASSANA JHANA

The first Vipassana jhana operates up to the point where a meditator attains the insight into rapid arising and passing away of phenomena. Experiencing this insight and going beyond it, a meditator grows up, as it were. He or she leaves behind the childhood of reflective thinking and enters the maturity of simple bare attention. Now the meditator's mind becomes lucid and sharp. He or she is able to follow the very fast rate at which phenomena appear and disappear from moment to moment. Because of the continuity and sharpness of mindfulness, there is little discursive thinking. Nor is there doubt about the impermanent, momentary nature of mind and matter. At this time, the practice seems effortless. In the absence of effortful application and reflective thought, there is space for joy and rapture. This non-thinking, bare attention is the *Second Vipassana Jhana*. ***In the First Vipassana Jhana, then, the mind is congested with effort and discursive thinking. It is only when the Second Vipassana Jhana arises at the beginning of insight into the arising and passing away of phenomena that clarity, rapture, faith and great comfort begin to predominate.***

THE DANGER OF FAITH, CALM, RAPTURE AND HAPPINESS

The mind is able to become more precise and concentration deepens. This deepened concentration leads to the clear, verified faith that arises from personal experiences. It also brings believing faith, faith that if one continues the practice one will gain the benefits promised by the Blessed One and by one's teacher. Rapture, mental and physical comfort has the tendency to become strong at this stage. When meditators attain the **Second Vipassana Jhana** there is a strong likelihood that they will become attached to these extraordinarily pleasant states of the mind. They experience the deepest happiness of their lives. Some may even believe they have become enlightened. In such a case, the prospect of further progress grows dim. Meditators will have done what the Buddha called 'stopping within'.

If you have extraordinary experiences, please make it a point to note and label them. Be clearly aware that rapture, faith, tranquillity and so forth are no more than mental states. ***If while noting them you realise that you are attached to them, cut the attachment immediately and return your attention to the primary object at the abdomen.*** Only then will your progress continue and it will bring you even sweeter fruit. Meditation teachers have to be tactful in dealing with students who are in this stage of practice. The students are so excited by their experiences that they tend to rebel if the teacher is too deflating. Paying heed to instructions, the meditator returns to sitting and carefully notes the lights, faith, rapture, happiness, tranquillity and comfort. It dawns on him or her that this simple noting actually is the correct path of practice. Thus re-oriented, he or she can proceed with great confidence.

THE ARISING OF THE THIRD VIPASSANA JHANA

Rapture will gradually fade, but mindfulness and concentration will continue to deepen. Then insight into the true nature of what is happening will become very strong. At this point, the enlightenment factors of upekkha, equanimity, becomes predominant. The mind remains unshaken by pleasant objects as well as unpleasant ones and a deep sense of comfort arises in the body and mind. Meditators can sit for long hours without pain and their bodies become pure, light and robust. This is the **Third Vipassana Jhana**, whose two jhanic factors are comfort and one-pointedness of mind. The third jhana arises at a more mature stage of the insight into arising and passing away. The transition from the second to the third jhana is a critical turning point in the practice. Human beings have a natural attachment to thrills and excitement which agitate the mind.

THE CLIMAX OF HAPPINESS AND DISSOLUTION OF PHENOMENA

Rapture is one of these agitating pleasures; it creates ripples in the mind. It is rather adolescent; so when you experience it, be certain to increase your vigilance and note as meticulously. As long as a meditator remains attached to rapture, he or she will not move forward to the more mature, subtle happiness that comes with peace and comfort. The happiness or comfort in this third Vipassana jhana is the peak or climax of happiness that experienced in Vipassana. Nevertheless, the meditator can dwell in it with equanimity and without attachment. To continue noting precisely remains crucial, lest the comforts of mind and body, the sharpness and clarity of insight, give rise to a subtle attachment. If your insight is good, sharp and clear, you should note this. Attachment is less likely to arise, since a comprehensive, panoramic mindfulness is present which notes each object easily without slipping.

The Third Jhana is called the climax of happiness because there is no more happiness in the next jhana. As you note phenomena, you will gradually pass beyond the stage of insight into arising and passing away into the stage of dissolution of phenomena. At this point the beginnings and the middles of objects are no longer clear. Instead the mind perceives continuous dissolution of phenomena, which disappear as soon as they are noted. Often it seems as if there is no body at all, only bare phenomena dissolving away continuously. Meditators tend to get distraught and upset, not only because they feel a lack of comfort, but also because the rapid disappearance of phenomena can be quite disconcerting. Before you can note an object, it is gone; the next behaves in the same way; concepts become indistinct. Up to now, meditator may have seen phenomena clearly, but the mental factor of perception, or recognition was still mixed in; hence, he or she was able to see both the ultimate, non-conceptual reality of objects and also the concept of form: body, arm, leg, head, abdomen, and so forth. At the dissolution stage of insight, concepts fall away. It will be difficult to tell where the phenomena are located; there is only disappearance. "What happened?" you may cry. "I was doing so well, and now my practice is falling apart. It is out of control. I can't note a single thing." Self judgement, dissatisfaction fills your mind and there is discomfort. Eventually it is possible to gain ease in this new space. You can just coolly settle back and watch the continual flow of phenomena. This stage is ***'Insight into Dissolution of Phenomena'***. There is no more physical or mental happiness or ease, nor are there out right discomforts or pains in the body at this time. The feeling in the mind is rather neutral too.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE FOURTH VIPASSANA JHANA

During the maturation of insight into arising and passing away of phenomena, the rapture of the second jhana gave way to the third jhana factor of comfort. The outrageous pleasure of rapture was replaced by milder and subtler feelings of comfort and peace. As comfort disappears in the dissolution stage of insight, it still does not incur mental displeasure. Now the third jhana gives way to the fourth jhana, whose characteristics jhana factors are equanimity and one-pointedness of mind. With a mind that is neither pleased nor displeased, comfort nor uncomfortable; upekkha or equanimity arises. Upekkha has a tremendous power to balance the mind. In this particular aspect, it is known as **tatra majjhata**. In this environment of balance, mindfulness can become perfectly pure, keen and sharp. Subtle aspects of phenomena can be seen with incredible and uninterrupted clarity as particles and tiny vibrations. In fact, tatra majjhata is present in each of the jhanas from the beginning. Yet in the first, second and third jhanas, it is hidden by more assertive qualities, like the moon in daylight which cannot compete with the sun.

SUMMARY OF THE FOUR VIPASSANA JHANAS

In the first jhana, balance is quite undeveloped. Predominantly instead are vitakka and vicara, (aiming and rubbing) or initial application and sustained application. As discussed above, the vitakka and vicara of the first jhana often include large amounts of discursive thinking. In the second jhana, the thrills and chills of rapture overshadow equanimity. Come the third jhana, there is the sweetest happiness and comfort, so that balance has no chance to show itself. When comfort evaporates, however, bringing about that feeling which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, then balance has a chance to shine. In just this way, when dusk sets in and darkness begins to thicken, the moon reigns splendidly over all the sky. After the insight into dissolution come successive insights into fear, disgust and wanting to be liberated. Equanimity is not strongly shown until the stage of insight known as 'equanimity regarding all formations'. This is a deep level of practice where things begin to move very smoothly.

Mindfulness is so agile now that it picks up the objects before the mind can begin to be perturbed by pleasantness or unpleasantness. There is no chance for attachment or aversion to arise. Objects which normally are very unpleasant lose their influence completely as do thrilling and exciting objects. Because this is true at all six sense doors, the kind of equanimity now present is known as 'six-limbed equanimity'.

A great subtlety of awareness is another feature of this time in practice. The rising and falling process becomes a vibration. It breaks into particles and may eventually disappear. If this happens, you should try to look at the sitting posture as a whole and perhaps some touch points such as buttocks and knees. These, too may disappear, leaving behind no perception of the body whatsoever. Sickness and pains disappear, for no physical phenomena remain to be perceived, no itches left to scratch. What remains is only the consciousness which knows the absence of physical phenomena. At such a time, this consciousness itself should be taken as the object of knowing. As you note; 'knowing, knowing', even that consciousness can begin to flicker and reappear. Yet, at the same time, there will be clarity of mind and extreme sharpness. This state of extreme mental balance is said to be like the mind of an arahant, which remains unshakable in the face of any object capable of arising in the field of consciousness. However, even if you have attained this stage of practice, you still are not an arahant. You are only experiencing a mind similar to an arahant's during this particular moment of mindfulness.

Each of the four Vipassana jhanas is characterised by a distinct type of happiness. In the first Vipassana jhana, one can experience the happiness of seclusion. The hindrances are kept away and so the mind is remote and secluded from them. In the second jhana, one experiences the happiness of concentration. Good concentration brings happiness in the form of rapture and comfort. As rapture is abandoned, the happiness of the third jhana is simply known as the happiness of comfort. Finally in the fourth jhana, we experience the happiness of wisdom. The fourth type is the best happiness of course. Like the first three, however, it still occurs in the realm of conditioned phenomena. Only if the meditator transcends this realm can he or she experience the ultimate happiness, the happiness of real peace. This is called *santisukha* in pali. It occurs when the objects of meditation and all other mental and physical phenomena as well as the noting mind itself come to a complete stop.

BOOK IV THE PROGRESS OF INSIGHT

A Mahasi Discourse

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	113
INTRODUCTION by Nyanaponika Thera	114
I. Purification of Conduct	116
II. Purification of Mind	118
III. Purification of View	121
1. Analytical Knowledge of Body and Mind	121
IV. Purification by Overcoming Doubt	122
2. Knowledge by Discerning Conditionality	122
3. Knowledge by Comprehension	124
4. Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away	125
The Ten Corruptions of Insight	125
V. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is Not Path	128
VI. Purification by Knowledge and Vision Of the Course of Practice	129
(Including the final stage of the Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away)	
5. Knowledge of Dissolution	129
6. Awareness of Fearfulness	131
7. Knowledge of Misery	132
8. Knowledge of Disgust	132
9. Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance	132
10. Knowledge of Re-observation	133
11. Knowledge of Equanimity about Formations	134
12. Insight Leading to Emergence	135
13. Knowledge of Adaptation	137
14. Maturity Knowledge	137
VII. Purification by Knowledge and Vision	137
15. Path Knowledge	137
16. Fruition Knowledge	138
17. Knowledge of Reviewing	138
18. Attainment of Fruition	139
19. The Higher Paths and Fruitions	140
Conclusion	141

PREAMBLE

A strict moral discipline must be kept to make progress in meditation (*especially when the goal is Nibbana.*) Although this account of morality listed below is not found until well after the Buddha's time, it is not out of keeping with the spirit of His Teachings and can well be made use of as a guide to practice. The meditator should grasp this spirit of moral discipline.

In the case of the Seven Purifications, the purity implied is reckoned in terms of the elimination of the unwholesome factors opposed to each purification.

SEVEN PURIFICATIONS: A MENU

Purification of Virtue implies the purity obtained through abstinence from bodily and verbal misconduct and wrong livelihood.

Purification of Mind is the purity resulting from cleansing the mind of attachment, aversion, inertia, restlessness and conflict; securing it against their influx.

Purification of View is brought about by dispelling the distortions of wrong views.

Purification by Overcoming Doubt is purity through the conquest of all doubts concerning the pattern of samsaric existence.

Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is Path and Not Path signifies the purity attained by passing beyond the alluring distractions which arise in the course of Insight Meditation.

Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way is purity resulting from the temporary removal of defilement which obstructs the path of practice, and lastly,

Purification by Knowledge and Vision is the purity gained by eradicating defilement together with their underlying tendencies by means of the Supramundane Paths; consisting of the Knowledge of the Four Paths; the Paths of Stream Entry, of Once-returning, of Non-returning and of Arahantship.

**NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO
SAMMA SAMBUDDHASSA**

Homage to Him, the Exalted One, the Worthy One, the Supremely Self-Enlightened One

THE PROGRESS OF INSIGHT



INTRODUCTION by Nyanaponika Thera

The framework of the Progress of Insight is the "**Seven Stages of Purification**" (*Satta-Visuddhi*). On gradually reaching advanced stages, in the meditational practice, various phases of Insight Knowledge (*ñāna*) are developed, leading to ultimate liberation. The approach is that of "bare insight" where, by direct observation, one's own body and mental processes are seen with increasing clarity as being impermanent, liable to suffering, and without a self or soul. The practice begins and continues with a few, selected subjects of body-contemplation. With the gradually increasing strength of mindfulness and concentration, the range widens and the vision deepens until Insight Knowledge unfolds in due order, as a natural outcome of the practice. *This approach to the practice of Vipassana meditation is known as bare insight because insight into the three characteristics of existence is made use of exclusively, dispensing with the prior development of full concentrative absorption (jhāna).* Nevertheless, a high degree of mental concentration is required for perseverance in the practice, for attaining Insight Knowledge, and for reaping its fruits. The foremost concern here is with the emerging stages of Knowledge in the Progress of Insight, together with the corresponding **Stages of Purification**, ...leading to the attainment of Arahantship.

It has been written in brief for the benefit of meditators who have obtained distinctive results in their practice, so that they may more easily understand their experiences; and for those who, in their practice of Insight, have taken up as their main subject either the tactile body process of motion*, evident in the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, or the tactile body process based on three of the primary elements of matter evident in the sensation of touch (body impact).

[* "Motion" (vayo, lit. wind, air) refers to the last of the four material elements (dhatu), or primary qualities of matter. The other three are: earth (solidity, hardness), water (adhesion), and fire (temperature). These four elements, always in varying proportional strength, are present in all forms of matter. The "inner wind element" which applies in this context is active in the body as motion, vibration and pressure manifesting itself in the passage of air through the body (e.g. in breathing), in the movement and pressure of limbs and organs, and so on. It becomes perceptible as a tactile process, or object of touch through the pressure caused by it.]

It is also meant for those who, by attending to these exercises, have gained Progressive Insights as well into the whole body-and-mind process arising at the Six Sense Doors, and have finally come to see the Dhamma, to attain to the Dhamma, to understand the Dhamma, to penetrate the Dhamma, who have passed beyond doubt, freed themselves from uncertainty, obtained assurance, and achieved independence [*refers to those individuals who have attained to the first supramundane stage on the road to Arahantship, that of stream entry, sotapatti] of others in the Master's Dispensation.

Nyanaponika Thera

THE PROGRESS OF INSIGHT

I. PURIFICATION OF CONDUCT (Silavisudhi)

Like any other tree, the great tree of the meditative life requires roots. The roots of the meditative life are **Purification of Conduct (Virtue)** and **Purification of Mind**. Unless these two roots are nourished, there will be no progress in meditation. The first and most fundamental of the roots is **Purification of Virtue**, which requires the understanding and maintaining of four types of restraint:

1. observing the precepts one has undertaken and protecting them like ones life, (for monks/nuns as well as for the laity)
2. guarding the six sense-doors restraining defilement from arising,
3. maintaining a righteous livelihood and
4. making use of one's requisite of life with mindfulness and wise reflection.

A meditator who lives according to these four ways of restraint will find nothing to get attached to or resent. The meditator then, is one who has a "light" livelihood, being light in body and content at heart, free from burdens of ownership as regards anything anywhere. Though these four principles were originally prescribed for monks and nuns; lay meditators should adapt them to their own situation. Everyone must have a standard of virtuous conduct dedicated to *Nibbana (see Appendix). The standard is relative to his or her status in life. Monks and nuns are expected to observe the precepts of training given in the two codes of moral discipline making up their respective rules (Patimokkhas). Male and female lay-devotees have five precepts as **a constant standard of virtuous conduct in their everyday life**. If they are more enthusiastic, they can observe the eight or ten precepts as a daily practice, or special observance during other significant days. Before one can establish oneself firmly in virtuous conduct, one must understand its significance well. Normally one protects one's conduct impelled by conscience and shame (*hiri* and *ottappa*). A wise man however observes virtuous conduct purely with the aim of attaining Nibbana. This conduct of restraint consists in mindfully guarding the Six Sense Doors, that is, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. By means of mindfulness, one can prevent the arising of defilement sparked off by sense experiences. All forms of desires, major and minor conflicts, as well as those deceptions which are extremely subtle, rooted in delusion itself and in pure and simple ignorance can be arrested by mindful noting.

Deceptions and delusions are difficult to fathom. But if one mindfully makes a mental note of every object "calling" at the Six Sense Doors, one can free oneself from deception. ***By failing to make a mental note of a pleasant feeling, one provides an opportunity for unwholesome thoughts to arise.*** Failing to make a mental note of an unpleasant feeling can be an opportunity for the arising of repugnance, while such a failure in regard to a neither unpleasant nor pleasant feeling might give rise to deception, delusion or ignorance. ***'Not knowing' and 'Misconceiving' of what should be known amounts to Delusion. Therefore the practice of mentally noting each and every object that calls at the six sense doors will also be helpful in getting rid of the underlying tendency to ignorance.***

When **PURIFICATION OF CONDUCT** has been established, the meditator who has chosen Pure Insight as his vehicle should endeavour to contemplate body and mind (nama-rupa). In doing so, he should contemplate, (according to their characteristics), the Five Groups of Grasping, that is, the body and mental processes that become evident to him at his own Six Sense Doors.

Insight must be developed by noting, according to their specific and general characteristics*, the body and mental processes that become evident at the Six Sense Doors. [*Things in their true nature have two characteristics or marks: specific characteristics and general characteristics. The understanding of the specific characteristics is knowledge by experience, while the understanding of the general characteristics is knowledge by inference. The specific characteristic, for instance, of the element of motion is its nature of supporting, its function of moving; its general characteristics are impermanence, dis-ease and a non-self or non ego identity.] At the beginning of the practice, however, it is difficult to follow and to note clearly all body and mental processes that incessantly appear at the Six Sense Doors. The meditator should first note the perfectly distinct process of touch, perceived through the door of body sensitivity; as in Insight Meditation one should note what is distinct and prominent. When sitting, there occurs the body process of touch by way of the sitting posture and through touch sensitivity in the body. These processes of tactile sensitivity should be noted as "sitting... touching...", and so forth, in due succession. Further, at the seated meditator's abdomen, the tactile process of body motion (that is, the wind, or vibratory element) which has breathing as its condition, is perceptible continuously as the rise (expansion) and fall (contraction) of the abdomen.

That, too, should be noted as "rising, falling," and so forth. While the meditator is thus engaged in noting the element of motion which impinges continuously on the door of body sensitivity in the abdomen, it becomes evident to him in its aspects of stiffening, of vibrating, and of pushing and pulling. Here;

- the aspect of stiffening shows the motion element's **characteristic nature** of supporting;
- the aspect of vibrating shows its **essential function** of movement; and
- the aspect of pushing and pulling shows its **manifestation** of impelling.

Hence, the meditator, noting the tactile body process of rise and fall of the abdomen, accomplishes the observation of the *body process (rupa)*, by getting to know the characteristic nature, etc., of the element of motion. Later when he has accomplished the observation of mind (*nama*) and the observation of both *body and mind (nama-rupa)*, he will also come to know the **general characteristics** of the processes concerned;

(a) their impermanence, (b) their liability to suffering, and (c) their being void of a self.

But while he is engaged in just noting the rising and falling of the abdomen and other tactile processes, there will appear thoughts of desire, etc., feelings of pleasure, etc., or acts such as adjusting various parts of the body. At that time, these activities (of mind and body) must be noted, too. After noting them, he should turn again to the continuous noting of the rising and falling of the abdomen, which is the basic object of mindfulness in this practice.

II. PURIFICATION OF MIND (*Citta-Visuddhi*)

During the early part of the methodical practice, as long as the meditator's mind is not yet fully purified, wandering thoughts of objects of sense desire, etc., will appear intermittently whilst mindfully noting the rise and fall of the abdomen. Sometimes the beginner will perceive occurrence of these interruptions, and sometimes not. But even if he perceives them, it will be only after a short time has elapsed after their appearance. These are "hindering thoughts." As the Momentary Concentration of his mind is still very tender and weak, these wandering thoughts continue to hinder his mind while it is occupied in developing the practice of mindful noting.



When, however, the Momentary Concentration of his mind have improved and developed intensity, the thought process of Noting becomes well concentrated. Hence, when attending to the objects to be noted, his noting thoughts now appear as if falling upon these objects, as if striking at them, as if confronting them again and again. Then, as a rule, his mind will no longer go elsewhere. Only occasionally, and in a slight degree, will this happen, and even in these cases he will be able to note any such stray thought at its very arising, as expressed in common speech; or, to be exact, he will note the stray thought immediately after its actual arising. Then that stray thought will subside as soon as it is noted and will not arise again. Immediately afterwards he will also be able to resume continuous noting of any object as it becomes evident to him. At this stage, his mind is "unhindered."

While the meditator is noting with unhindered mind, the noting mind will close in upon and fix on whatever object is being noted, and the act of noting will proceed without break, and there will arise in him an uninterrupted succession "the concentration of mind lasting for a moment," directed to each object noted. This "concentration of mind lasting for a minute", is **Purification of Mind**. This refers to mental concentration of either of two degrees of intensity: full or access concentration. In both concentration, the mind is **temporarily** purified from the five mental hindrances, which defile the mind and obstruct concentration. Though that concentration has only momentary duration, its power of resistance to being overwhelmed by opposition corresponds to that of access concentration. 'Momentary unification of mind' means the concentration of mind lasting only for a moment which fixes the mind immovably on its respective object in a single mode and is not overcome by opposition. "Immovably with its respective object" refers to the uninterrupted continuity of the thoughts engaged in noting; after noting one object, one attends, in the same manner of concentration, to another that follows immediately; again, having noted that object, one turns to the next one, and so on. "In a single mode" means: though the objects to be noted, as they present themselves, are numerous and varied, yet the force of concentration of the mind uninterruptedly engaged in noting remains virtually on the same level. For what is meant here is: just as the first object was noted with a certain degree of concentration, so the second, third, and other subsequent objects are noted in each case with the same degree of concentration.

"Is not overcome by opposition": this means that the momentary concentration in its uninterrupted flow is not overwhelmed by the mental hindrances; as it is not being overwhelmed, it is pure.

[A Note from Bhikkhu Bodhi: Purification of mind as understood in the Buddha's teaching is the sustained endeavor to cleanse the mind of defilement, those dark unwholesome mental forces which run beneath the surface stream of consciousness vitiating our thinking, values, attitudes, and actions. The chief among the defilement are the three that the Buddha has termed the "roots of evil"; greed, hatred, and delusion, from which emerge their numerous offshoots and variants; anger and cruelty, avarice and envy, conceit and arrogance, hypocrisy and vanity, the multitude of erroneous views. However, in the Buddha's teaching the criterion of Enlightenment lies in purity of mind. The purpose of all insight is to liberate the mind from the defilement, and Nibbana itself, the goal of the teaching, is defined quite clearly as freedom from greed, hatred and delusion. The defilement, the Buddha declares, lie at the bottom of all human suffering. Burning within as lust and craving, as rage and resentment, they lay to waste hearts, lives, hopes, and civilisations, and drive us blind and thirsty through the round of birth and death. The Buddha describes the defilement as bonds, fetters, hindrances, and knots; thence the path to unbonding, release, and liberation, to untying the knots, is at the same time a discipline aimed at inward cleansing. The work of purification must be undertaken in the same place where the defilement arise, in the mind itself, and the main method the Dhamma offers for purifying the mind is meditation].

III. PURIFICATION OF VIEW (Ditthi-Visuddhi)

1. Analytical Knowledge of Mind and Matter (nama rupa pariccheda nana)

Endowed with **PURIFICATION OF MIND** and continuing the practice of noting, the meditator now comes to know mind and matter analytically as follows: ***"The rising (upward movement) of the abdomen is one process; the falling (downward movement) is another; sitting is another; touching is another, etc."*** In this way he comes to know how to distinguish each body process that he notes. He realises: ***"The knowing of the rising movement is one process; the knowing of the falling movement is another."*** In this way he comes to know each mental act of noting. He realises: ***"The rising movement is one process; the knowing of it is another. The falling movement is one process; the knowing of it is another,"*** and so on.

In that way he comes to know how to distinguish each Body and Mental process. All that knowledge comes from simply noting, not from reasoning; that is to say, it is knowledge by Direct Experience arrived at by the mere act of noting, and not knowledge derived from logical deductions. Hence, when seeing a visual object with the eye, the meditator knows how to distinguish each single factor involved:



***“The eye is one;
the visual object is another;
seeing is another,
and knowing it is another.”***



The same manner applies in the case of the other sense functions. In each act of noting, the meditator comes to know analytically ***the mental processes*** of noting, and those of thinking and reflecting, knowing them for himself through direct knowledge of his experience thus: ***‘They have the nature of going towards an object, inclining towards an object, cognising an object’***. On the other hand, he knows analytically ***the material processes*** going on in the whole body, which are here described as "the rising and falling movements of the abdomen," "sitting," etc.; knowing them thus: ***‘These Do Not have the nature of going or inclining towards an object, or of cognising an object’***. Such knowing is called, "knowing matter (or body) by its manifestation of non-determining." 'Non-determining' (as in the passage quoted) should be understood as having no faculty of cognising an object." Such knowledge as this, which analyses each act of noting both the body process and the mental process engaged in noting, according to their true essential nature, is: ***Analytical Knowledge of Mind and Matter.***

When that knowledge has come to maturity, the meditator realises that: ‘At the moment of breathing in: There is just the rising movement of the abdomen and the knowing of the movement, there is No Self involved’. ‘At the moment of breathing out: There is just the falling movement of the abdomen and the knowing of the movement, there is No Self involved’. Understanding it in these and other instances, he knows and sees for himself by noting: ***‘There is here only this pair: A Material process as Object, and A Mental process of Knowing. It is to this pair alone that the terms of conventional usage; ‘being’, ‘person’, or ‘soul’, ‘I’ or ‘another’, ‘man’ or ‘woman’ refers. Apart from That Dual Process there is No Separate Person or Being, I, Another, Man or Woman’. This Is Purification of View.***

IV. PURIFICATION BY OVERCOMING DOUBT (Kankha vitarana Visuddhi)

2. Knowledge by Discerning Conditionality (paccaya pariggahana).

When **PURIFICATION OF VIEW** has come to maturity, the conditions necessary for the body and mental processes observed will also become evident. Firstly, the consciousness that conditions the (respective) body process will be evident. ***As in bending the arms or legs, the consciousness of the intention to bend these limbs is evident.*** Next the meditator notes the act of bending, and so on. Then he understands by direct experience, ***'When there is a Conscious Intention to bend a limb the body process of bending arises. Similarly, when there is a conscious intention to stretch a limb the body process of stretching arises.'***

In the same way he understands other instances, too by direct experience. He also understands by direct experience the condition for the mental process, in the following manner: In the case of a conscious desire to stray, there arises first a corresponding consciousness giving initial attention (to the distracting object). If that consciousness is not noted (with mindfulness), then there arises a consciousness that strays. But if the consciousness of initial attention to the distracting object is noted and known, no stray thoughts will arise. It is similar in the case of other types of consciousness, for instance: when taking delight or being angry, greedy, etc. *When the eye and a visual object are present, there arises visual consciousness.* Otherwise visual consciousness will not arise. So it is in the case of the other sense doors. If there is a recognisable object, then there arises consciousness engaged in noting, thinking, reasoning or understanding, as the case may be; otherwise no such consciousness arises. Similarly, the meditator understands occurrences concerning other mind-door cognition. During such processes, the meditator will generally experience many different feelings arising in his body. While one of these feelings is being noted (but without concern), another feeling will arise elsewhere, and while that is being noted, again another will appear elsewhere. Thus the meditator follows each feeling as it arises and notes it. But though he is engaged in noting these feelings as they arise, he will only perceive their initial phase of "arising" and not their final phase of "dissolution."

At this stage, mental images such as, a monk, a man, a house, a tree, a park, a heavenly mansion, clouds and others may appear. While the meditator is still engaged in noting one of these mental images, another will show itself; while still noting that, yet another will appear.

As they arise, he goes on noting them. But though he is engaged in noting them, he will perceive only their initial phase, not the final phase. He now understands: **'Consciousness arises in accordance with each object that becomes evident. If there is an object, there arises consciousness; if there is no object, no consciousness will arise.'** Between sequences of noting he also, by considering inferentially, comes to know: 'It is due to the presence of such causes and conditions as ignorance, craving, kamma, etc., that body-and-mind continue.' Such discernment through direct experience and through inference as described, when noting body-and-mind with their conditions, is: **Knowledge of Discerning Conditionality.**

When that knowledge has come to maturity, the meditator perceives only body and mind processes occurring in strict accordance with their particular and appropriate conditions and he comes to the conclusion: **'Here is only a conditioning body and mind process. Apart from these, there is no person who performs the bending of the limbs, etc., or who experiences feelings of pain, etc.'** This is **Purification of Insight by Overcoming Doubt.**

3. Knowledge by Comprehension (sammasana-nana)

When "**Purification of Insight By Overcoming Doubt**" has reached maturity; the meditator will discern distinctly: **The Initial, Middle and Final phases of any object noted by him.** Then, in the case of various objects noted, he will discern distinctly that: **Only after each earlier process has ceased, does there arise a subsequent process.** For instance, only when the rising movement of the abdomen has come to an end, does there arise the falling movement; only when that has ended, is there again a rising movement. So also in the case of walking, only when the lifting of the foot has come to an end, does there arise the carrying forward of the foot; only when that has been completed, does there follow the placing of the foot on the ground. In the case of painful feelings, only after each single feeling occurring at its particular place has ceased, will another new feeling arise at another place. On noting the painful feeling repeatedly, the meditator will see that it gradually grows less, and at last ceases entirely. In the case of the various shaped images that enter the mind's field, **it is only after each single image noted has vanished, that another new object will come into the mind's focus.**

On noting them attentively twice, thrice or more, he will see that these mental objects which are being noted move from one place to another, or they become gradually smaller and less distinct, until at last they disappear entirely. **The meditator does not perceive anything that is permanent and lasting, or free from destruction and disappearance. Seeing how objects, even while being noted, are subject to destruction and disappearance, the meditator comprehends impermanence.** He further comprehends **suffering** (pain) in the objects breaking up after each arising. Having seen how various painful feelings arise in continuous succession, how if one painful feeling ceases, another arises, and when that has ceased, again another arises, having seen that, he comprehends the respective objects as just a heap of suffering. Further, he comprehends the object as consisting of mere **impersonal** phenomenon without a master, in the sense of not arising of (or by) themselves, but arising subject to conditions and then breaking up. This comprehension of an object noted, as being impermanent, painful, and without a self (impersonal), through knowing its nature of impermanence, etc., by means of simply noting, without reflecting and reasoning, is; **Knowledge by Comprehension Through Direct Experience.**

Having seen the **Three Characteristics** once or several times by direct experience, the meditator, by inference from the direct experience of those objects noted, comprehends all body and mental processes of the past, present and future, and the whole world, by coming to the conclusion: 'They, too, are in the same way impermanent, painful, and without a self.' This is: **Knowledge of Comprehension by Inference.** As such, even if the impermanence of only a single formation (conditioned phenomenon) is known, there may be consideration of the rest by inference thus: **All Formations are Impermanent.** These words '**All formations are impermanent**' refer to an understanding by inference, and not to an understanding by perceiving a (co-present) object at the same moment.

4. Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away (Udayabbaya-nana) The Ten Corruptions of Insight

When noting, the meditator is able to keep exclusively to the present body and mind process, without looking back to past processes or ahead to future ones, then, as a result of Insight, the mental vision of a **brilliant light** will appear to him. To one it will appear like the light of a lamp, to others like a flash of lightning, or like the radiance of the moon or the sun, and so on.

With one it may last for just one moment, with others it may last longer. There will also arise in him strong *mindfulness* pertaining to Insight. As a result, all the successive arisings of body and mental processes will present themselves to the consciousness engaged in noting, as if coming to it of themselves; and mindfulness too seems as if alighting on the processes of itself. Therefore the meditator then believes, **'There is no body and mind process in which Mindfulness fails to engage'**.

His *knowledge* consisting in insight, here called '*noting*,' will be likewise keen, strong and lucid. Consequently, he will discern clearly and in separate forms all the body and mental processes noted, as if cutting to pieces a bamboo sprout with a well-sharpened knife. Therefore the meditator realises that: **'There is no body and mind process that cannot be noted'**. When examining the characteristics of impermanence, etc., or other aspects of reality, he understands everything quite clearly and at once, and he believes it to be the knowledge derived from direct experience.

Further, strong *faith* pertaining to Insight arises in him. Under its influence, the meditator's mind, when engaged in noting or thinking, is serene and without any disturbance, and when he is engaged in recollecting the virtues of the **Buddha**, the **Dhamma** and the **Sangha**, his mind quite easily gives itself over to them. There arises in him the wish to proclaim the Buddha's Teaching, joyous confidence in the virtues of those engaged in meditation, the desire to advise dear friends and relatives to practise meditation, grateful remembrance of the help received from his meditation master, his spiritual mentor, etc. These and many other similar mental processes will occur. There arises also *rapture* in its five grades, which are: (1) minor, (2) momentarily recurring, (3) flooding, (4) elevating, (5) suffusing.

When **Purification of Mind** is gained, rapture appears producing a sublime feeling of happiness and exhilaration, filling the whole body with an exceedingly sweet and subtle thrill. Under its influence, he feels as if the whole body had risen up and remained in the air without touching the ground, or as if it were seated on an air cushion, or as if it were floating up and down. There arises *tranquillity* of mind with the characteristic of calming the disturbances of consciousness and its mental concomitants, and along with it mental agility appear, etc. When walking, standing, sitting or reclining there is, under the influence of these mental qualities, no disturbance of consciousness and its mental concomitants, nor heaviness, rigidity, unwieldiness, sickness, or crookedness.

Rather, his consciousness and its mental concomitants are tranquil through having reached the supreme relief in non-action (or *bare attention*). They are agile in always functioning swiftly; they are pliant in being able to attend to any object desired; they are wieldy, in being able to attend to an object for any length of time desired; they are quite lucid through their proficiency, that is, through the ease with which insight penetrates the object; they are also straight through being directed, inclined, and turned only towards wholesome activities.

There also arises a very sublime feeling of *happiness* suffusing all his body. Under its influence he becomes exceedingly joyous and blissful. There also arises in him *energy* that is neither too lax nor too tense, is vigorous and acts evenly. Previously his energy had sometimes been lax, and thus had been overpowered by sloth and torpor; hence he was not able to note keenly and continuously the objects as they became evident. His understanding, too, had not been clear. At other times his energy had been too tense, and thus was overpowered by agitation, with the same result of not being able to note keenly, etc. Now his energy is neither too lax nor too tense, is vigorous and acts evenly; and so, overcoming sloth, torpor and agitation, he is now able to note objects keenly and continuously, and his understanding is quite clear, too.

There also arises in him strong *equanimity* associated with Insight, which is neutral towards all formations. Under its influence he regards with neutrality even his examination of the nature of these formations with respect to their being impermanent, etc.; and he is able to note keenly and continuously the body and mental processes arising at the time. Then his activity of noting is carried on without effort, and proceeds, as it were, of itself. Also in adverting to the objects, there arises in him strong equanimity, by virtue of which his mind enters, as it were, quickly into the objects of advertence. There arises further a subtle *attachment* of a calm nature that enjoys the Insight graced with the 'brilliant light' and the other qualities here described. ***The meditator, however, is not able to discern it as a corruption but believes it to be just the very bliss of meditation. So meditators speak in praise of it thus: 'Only now do I find full delight in meditation!' Having felt such rapture and happiness accompanied by the 'brilliant light' and enjoying the very act of perfect noting, which is ably functioning with ease and rapidity, the meditator now believes: 'Surely I must have attained the supramundane Path and Fruition! Now I have finished the task of meditation.' This Is Mistaking What Is Not The Path For The Path***

It is a corruption of Insight which usually takes place in the manner just described in the few preceding paragraphs. But even if the meditator does not take the 'brilliant light' and the other corruptions as an indication of the Path and Fruition, still he feels delight in them. This is likewise a corruption of insight. Therefore, the knowledge consisting in noting, even if quick in its functioning, is 'the early stage of (or 'weak') knowledge of arising and passing away,' if it is beset and corrupted by those corruptions. For the same reason the meditator is at that time not in a position to discern quite distinctly the arising and passing away of body and mental processes.

[*The supramundane paths and fruitions are: stream-entry (sotapanna), once-returning (sakadagami), non-returning (anagami), and Arahantship. By attaining to stream-entry, final deliverance is assured at the latest, after seven more rebirths. A sotapanna is free from the three fetters: (1) sakkayaditthi, (2) vicikiccha, (3) silabbata-paramasa. Furthermore his observance of the five precepts, morality, remains pure and unpolluted as a matter of course. For these reasons, (1) a sotapanna is liberated from the four Nether Worlds and after being reborn in the world of human beings or devas for seven existences at the most, he will attain Arahantship in his last seventh existence and pass into Nibbana. (2) a sakadagami is free from coarse sensuous cravings (kamaraga) and coarse ill-will (byapada). He will enter Arahantship and Nibbana only after two existences at most. (3) an anagami is absolutely free from kamaraga, byapada and will never be reborn in the world of humans or devas, but only in the Brahma Worlds from which he will attain Nibbana after becoming an Arahant.]

V. PURIFICATION BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION OF WHAT IS PATH AND WHAT IS NOT- PATH (Maggamagga-nanadassana-Visuddhi)

While noting, the meditator either by himself or through instructions from someone else, comes to this decision: 'The brilliant light, and the other things experienced by me, are not the path. Delight in them is merely a corruption of Insight. ***The practice of continuously noting the object as it becomes evident - that alone is the way of Insight.*** I must go on with just the work of noting.'

This decision is: ***Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is Path and What is Not-Path.***

VI. PURIFICATION BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION OF THE COURSE OF PRACTICE (*Patipada-nanadassana-Visuddhi*)

After noting these manifestations of brilliant light and such others, and leaving them unheeded, he goes on continuously as before with the act of noting the body and mental processes as they become evident at the Six Sense Doors. While thus engaged in noting, he gets over the corruption relating to brilliant light, rapture, tranquillity, happiness, attachment, etc., and his knowledge remains concerned exclusively with the arising and passing away of the processes noted. For then, at each act of noting, he sees: ***'The noted object, having arisen, disappears instantly.'***

It also becomes clear to him that each object disappears just where it arises; it does not move on to another place. In this way he understands by direct experience how: ***Body and Mental Processes arise and break up from moment...to...moment.*** It is such knowledge and understanding resulting from the continuous noting of body and mental processes as they arise and dissolve moment after moment, and the discernment, in separate sections, of the arising and passing away of each of them, while being free from the corruptions, that is the: ***Final Knowledge of Contemplation of Arising And Passing Away.*** This is the beginning of: ***Purification by Knowledge and Vision of The Course of Practice.*** Which begins from this insight and extends to ***Adaptation Knowledge.***

5. Knowledge Of Dissolution (*Bhanga-nana*)

Noting the body and mental processes as they arise, he sees them part by part, link by link, piece by piece, fraction by fraction: 'Just now it arises, just now it breaks-up.' When ***Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away*** becomes mature, keen and strong, it will arise easily and proceed uninterrupted as if borne onward of itself; also the body and mental processes will be easily discernible. When keen knowledge carries on and formations are easily discernible, then neither the arising of each body and mental process, nor its middle phase of 'presence,' nor the continuity of body and mental processes of 'occurrence as unbroken flux' is apparent to him; nor are the shape of the hand, the foot, the face, the body, and so on, apparent to him. But what is apparent to him is only the *ceasing* of body and mental processes, 'disappearing,' or 'passing away,' or 'dissolution.' For instance, while noting the rising movement of the abdomen, neither its initial nor middle phase is apparent, but only the ceasing or disappearing, which is the final phase, is apparent; and so it is also with the falling movement of the abdomen.

Again, in the case of bending an arm or leg, while noting the act of bending, neither the initial nor the middle phase of bending is apparent, nor is the form of the limb apparent, but only the final phase of ceasing and disappearing is apparent. It is similar in the other cases of stretching a limb, and so on. Each object that is being noted seems to him to be entirely absent or to have become non-existent.

Consequently, at this stage of knowledge, it seems to him as if he were engaged in noting something which is absent or non-existent; and the consciousness engaged in noting appears to have lost contact with the object that is being noted. It is for that reason that a meditator may here think: 'I have lost the Insight'; but he should not think so. Prior to this stage, his consciousness delights in conceptual objects of shapes, etc.; and even up to the Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away, the idea of formations with their specific features... [this phrase elaborates the meaning applicable here of the Pali term *nimitta*, which literally means 'mark,' 'sign,' 'feature,' i.e. the idea or image conceived of an object perceived.]... have always been apparent to him. Hence his mind took delight in a plainly distinguishable object consisting of formations, with its particular structure [*the distinctive (vi) graspable (gaha) form of an object.*] and its particular feature-idea. But now that his knowledge has developed in the way described, no such idea of the formations' features or structures appear to him, still less any other, cruder concept.

At such a stage, the arising of formations, that is, the first phase of the process, is not apparent (as it is in the case of ***Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away***), but there is apparent only the dissolution, that is, the final phase, having the nature of disappearing. Therefore the meditator's mind does not take delight in it at first, but he may be sure that soon, after becoming familiar (with that stage of the practice), his mind will delight in the cessation (of the phenomena) too, which is called their dissolution. With this assurance he should again turn to the practice of continuous noting. When thus engaged, he perceives that in each act of noting there are always present two factors; ***an objective factor and a subjective one, the object noted and the mental state of knowing it, which breaks-up and disappears by pairs, one pair after the other.*** In each single instance of a rising movement of the abdomen, there are, in fact, numerous physical processes constituting the rising movement, which are seen to break-up serially.

It is like seeing the continuous successive disappearing of a summer mirage moment by moment; or the quick and continuous bursting of bubbles produced in a heavy shower by rain drops falling on a water surface; or like the quick, successive extinction of oil-lamps or candles, blown out by the wind. Similar to that appears the breaking-up and disappearing, moment by moment, of the body processes noted. And the dissolution of consciousness noting those body processes is apparent to him along with the dissolution of the body processes.

Also while he is noting other body and mental processes, their dissolution will be apparent to him in the same manner. Consequently, the knowledge will come to him that whatever part of the whole body is noted, that object ceases first, and after it the consciousness engaged in noting that object follows in its wake. From that the meditator will understand very clearly in the case of each successive pair the dissolution of any object whatsoever and the dissolution of the consciousness noting that very object. [It should be borne in mind that this refers only to understanding arrived at through direct experience by one engaged in noting only; it is not an opinion derived from reasoning.] It is the perfectly clear understanding of the dissolution of the two things, pair by pair: the visual or other object appearing at any of the six sense doors, and the consciousness noting that very object. ***This is Knowledge of Dissolution.***

6. Awareness of Fearfulness (Bhayatupatthana-nana)

When **Knowledge of Dissolution** is mature, through repeated noting of the dissolution of all object-and-subject-formations, or mind and matter phenomena, there will gradually arise, the awareness of **Fearfulness** and other **(Higher) Knowledge**, together with their respective aspects of fear, and so on. Having seen how the dissolution of two things, that is, any object noted and the insight-thought engaged in noting it, takes place moment by moment, the meditator also understands by inference that in the past, too, every conditioned thing (formation) had broken up in the same way, as just so it will break up also in the future, and that at the present it breaks up, too. Just at the time of noting any formation that is evident, this formation will appear to him in its aspect of fearfulness. Therefore, during the very act of noting, the meditator will also come to understand: ***'These formations are indeed fearful.'*** Such understanding of their fearfulness is: ***Knowledge of the Awareness of Fearfulness***, [it also has the name **'Knowledge of Fear'**] at which stage, his mind will be gripped by fear and appear helpless.

7. Knowledge of Misery (Adinava-nana)

When he has realised the fearfulness (of the formations) through the **Knowledge of Fear**, and keeps on noting continuously, then the **Knowledge of Misery** will arise in him before long. When it has arisen, all formations everywhere; whether among the objects noted, or among the states of consciousness engaged in noting, or in any kind of life or existence that is brought to mind; will appear insipid, without a vitalizing factor,...[without nutritive essence]...and unsatisfying. So he sees, at that time, only suffering, only unsatisfactoriness, only misery. This is: **Knowledge of Misery**.

8. Knowledge of Disgust (Nibbida-nana)

Seeing thus the misery in conditioned things (formations), his mind finds no delight in those miserable things but is entirely disgusted with them. At times, his mind becomes, as it were, discontented and listless. Even so he does not give up the practice of insight, but spends his time continuously engaging in it. He therefore should know that this state of mind is not dissatisfaction with meditation, but is precisely: The **Knowledge of Disgust**. This has the aspect of being disgusted with the formations. Even if he directs his thought to the happiest sort of life and existence, or to the most pleasant and desirable objects, his mind will not take delight in them, will find no satisfaction in them. On the contrary, his mind will incline, lean and tend only towards Nibbana. Therefore the following thought will arise in him between moments of noting: **'The ceasing of all formations that are falling away from moment to moment; that alone is happiness.'**

9. Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance (Muncitu-kamyata-nana)

When through this Knowledge (now acquired) he feels disgust with regard to every formation noted, there will arise in him a desire to forsake these formations or to become delivered from them. The knowledge relating to that desire is: **Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance**. At that time, usually various painful feelings arise in his body, and also an unwillingness to remain long in one particular body posture. Even if these states do not arise, the comfortless nature of the formations will become more evident than ever. And due to that, between moments of noting, he feels a longing thus: 'Oh, may I soon be free from this! Oh, may I reach the state where these formations cease! Oh, may I be able to give up these formations completely!' At this juncture, his consciousness engaged in noting seems to shrink from the object noted at each moment of noting, and wishes to escape from it.

10. Knowledge of Re-observation (Patisankhanupassana-nana)

Being thus desirous of escaping from the formations, the meditator makes a stronger effort and continues the practice of noting these very formations with the single purpose of forsaking them and escaping from them. For that reason, the knowledge arising at that time is: **Knowledge of Re-Observation**. The term 're-observation' has the same meaning as 're-noting' or 're-contemplation.' Then the nature (or characteristics) of the formations; their being impermanent, suffering and without a self; will be clearly evident to him; and among these three, the aspect of suffering will be particularly distinct.

At this stage, too, there will usually arise in his body various kinds of pains which are severe, sharp, and of growing intensity. Hence his whole body and mental system will seem to him like an unbearable mass of sickness or a conglomeration of suffering. A state of restlessness will usually manifest itself, making him incapable of keeping to one particular posture for any length of time, then he will soon want to change it. This state, however, simply manifests the unbearable nature of the formations. Though he wants to change his body posture, still he should not give in easily to that wish, but should endeavour to remain motionless for a longer period in the same posture and continue to carry on the practice of noting; and by doing so he will be able to overcome his restlessness.

Now his Insight Knowledge is quite strong and lucid, and by virtue of this, even his painful feelings will at once cease as soon as they are firmly noted. Even if a painful feeling does not cease completely, he will perceive that it is disappearing, part by part, from moment to moment. That is to say, the passing away, the ceasing, disappearing, and disappearing of each single moment of feeling will become apparent separately in each corresponding act of noting. In other words, it is a progressive development from the stage of **Knowledge of Comprehension**, when the constant flow or continuity of feelings of the same kind was apparent as a single unit. But if, without abandoning the practice, that feeling of pain is firmly and continuously noted, it will cease entirely before long. When it ceases in this way, it does so for good and will not arise again. Even so, he may not be satisfied with his progress and will think that his Insight Knowledge is not clear.

He should, however, dismiss such thoughts by applying the act of noting to them, and he should go on with his task of continuously noting the body and mental formations as they occur. If he perseveres thus, his noting will become clearer as time passes in minutes, hours and days. Then he will overcome the painful feelings and the restlessness in being unable to remain long in one particular posture, and also the idea that his Insight Knowledge is not yet clear enough. His noting will then function rapidly, and at every moment of noting he will understand quite clearly the three characteristics of impermanence, etc.

This understanding of the Three Characteristics of Existence;; **IMPERMANENCE, UNSATISFACTORINESS** and **NON-SELF**, through the act of noting which functions with promptness in quick succession, is: ***Strong Knowledge of Re-Observation.***

11. Knowledge of Equanimity about Formations (Sankhar'-upekkhanna)

When this **Knowledge of Re-observation** is mature, there will arise knowledge perceiving evident body and mental processes in continuous succession quite naturally, as if borne onward of itself. This is: **Knowledge of Equanimity About Formations.**

Now, in the act of noting, effort is no longer required to keep formations before the mind or to understand them. After the completion of each single act of noting, the object to be noted will appear by itself, and Insight Knowledge, too, will of itself note and understand it. It is as if no further effort need be made by the meditator. Earlier, due to seeing the ***Dissolution of Formations***, there arose, in successive order:

- ***Aspect of Fearfulness,***
- ***Perception of Misery,***
- ***Aspect of Disgust,***
- ***Desire for Deliverance, and***
- ***Dissatisfaction with the Knowledge so far acquired.***

But now these mental states no longer arise even though, in the present state too, the breaking up of formations which are disappearing more rapidly is closely perceived. Even if a painful feeling arises in the body, no mental disturbance, such as grief arises, and there is no lack of fortitude in bearing with it.

Generally, however, at this stage, pains will be entirely absent, they do not arise at all. Even if the meditator thinks about something fearful or sad, no mental disturbance will arise, be it in the form of fear or of sorrow. This, firstly, is: ***The Abandoning of Fear at the Stage of Equanimity about Formations.*** At the earlier stage, on attaining ***Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away***, great joy had arisen on account of the clarity of Insight. But now this kind of joy does not arise, even though there is present the exceedingly peaceful and sublime clarity of mind belonging to '***Equanimity about Formations.***' Though he sees desirable objects conducive to joy, or thinks about various enjoyable things, no strong feeling of joy will arise. This is: ***The Abandoning of Delight at the Stage of Equanimity about Formations.*** He cherishes no desire nor hate with regard to any object, desirable or undesirable, that comes into his sense doors, but taking them as just the same in his act of noting, he understands them [that is to say, it is a pure act of understanding]. This is: ***Equable Vision at the Stage Equanimity about Formations.*** Of these three qualities just mentioned, it is said: 'Having discarded fear and delight, he is impartial and neutral towards all formations' (*Visuddhimagga*, xxi 62).

If he resumes the practice of noting, thinking: 'Now I will do it vigorously again!' then, before long, the noting will function efficiently as if borne onward of itself. From now onwards there is no need for the meditator to make further, deliberate effort. His noting will now proceed in a continuous and steady flow for a long time; it will go on even for two or three hours without interruption. This is: ***The State of Long-Lasting Practice of Equanimity about Formations.*** Now when noting functions spontaneously as if borne onward of itself, the mind, even if sent out towards a variety of objects, generally refuses to go; and even if it does go, it will not stay long but will soon return to the usual object to be noted, and will resume continuous noting. In this connection it was said: 'He shrinks, recoils, and retreats; he does not go forth to it.'

12. Insight Leading to Emergence (Vutthanagamini-Vipassana-nana)

So, through ***Knowledge of Equanimity about Formations***, which is endowed with many virtues, blessings, and power, he notes the formations as they occur. This Knowledge when culminating in maturity, and becoming keen, strong and lucid, will understand the formations as being ***impermanent, painful or without self***, by noting their dissolution.

Now that act of noting any one characteristic out of the three, which is still more lucid in its perfect understanding, manifests itself two or three times or more in rapid succession. This is: **Insight Leading to Emergence**. The 'insight leading to emergence' is the culmination of insight, and is identical with the following three knowledge: **Equanimity About Formations, Desire For Deliverance, and Knowledge of Re-Observation**. It is called 'leading to emergence' because it emerges from the contemplation of formations (conditioned phenomena) to the supramundane path that has Nibbana as its object.

Thereupon, immediately after the last consciousness in the series of acts of noting this '**Insight Leading to Emergence**', the meditator's consciousness leaps forth into Nibbana, the **Cessation of all Formations**, taking it as its object. **Then there appears to him the stilling (subsidence) of all Formations called Cessation**. This mode of realisation of **Nibbana** has been mentioned in many discourses of the Master, for example: **The Vision of Truth Arose: Whatsoever has the Nature of Arising; is Bound to Cease**. Herein the words 'bound to cease' indicate the aspect of realising the stilling and ceasing of all formations which have the nature of arising.

The meaning is this: the meditator who wishes to realise **Nibbana** should repeatedly bring to mind, through the practice of noting, every body and mental process that appears at any of the Six Sense Doors. When he brings them to mind thus, his consciousness engaged in noting; here called 'bringing to mind' will, until Adaptation Knowledge is reached, fall at every moment upon the (conditioned) body and mental formations called here 'continuous occurrence,' because they go on occurring over and over again in an unbroken flow, like a river's current. But in the last phase, instead of falling upon that continuous occurrence, consciousness passes beyond it and alights upon 'non-occurrence,' which is the very opposite of the body and mental formations called 'occurrence.'

In other words, it arrives at non-occurrence; that is to say; it reaches, as if it 'alights upon,' Cessation, which is the Stilling of the Formations (or conditioned phenomena).

When the meditator, having already before practised correctly and without deviation by way of the **Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away** and the other **Knowledge** (or by way of the Purification of Conduct, of Mind, of View, etc.), has in this manner arrived at non-occurrence (by the consciousness alighting upon it), he is said to have 'realised Nibbana.' He has made Nibbana a direct experience and has actually seen it.

13. Knowledge of Adaptation (Anuloma-nana)

Here the knowledge by way of noting what occurs last in: *the series constituting Insight leading to Emergence, is; Knowledge Of Adaptation.* The knowledge of adaptation derives its name from the fact that it adapts itself to the earlier and the later states of mind. It adapts itself to the preceding eight insight knowledges with their individual functions, and to the thirty-seven states partaking of enlightenment that follow.

This Is the end of the Purification By Knowledge and Vision of the Course of Practice.

14. Maturity Knowledge (Gotrabhu-nana)

Immediately afterwards, **Maturity Knowledge** manifests itself, as it were, falls for the first time into Nibbana, which is void of formations (conditioned phenomena) since it is the cessation of all formations. Gotrabhu-nana (maturity knowledge) is, literally, the 'knowledge of one who has become one of the lineage (gotra).' By attaining to that knowledge, one has left behind the designation and stage of an unliberated worldling and is entering the lineage and rank of the noble ones, i.e. the stream-enterer, etc. Insight has now come to full maturity, maturing into the knowledge of the supramundane paths and fruitions. Maturity knowledge occurs only as a single moment of consciousness; it does not recur, since it is immediately followed by the path consciousness of stream-entry or once-returning, etc.

VII. PURIFICATION BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION (Nanadassana-Visuddhi)

15. Path Knowledge (Magga-nana)

It is followed immediately by knowledge that abides in that same Nibbana, which is void of formations since it is the cessation of them. This is: **Path Knowledge.** Path knowledge is the knowledge connected with the four supramundane paths of stream-entry, etc. Here, in this passage, only the path of stream-entry is meant.

Path knowledge, like maturity knowledge, lasts only for one moment of consciousness, being followed by the fruition knowledge resulting from it, which may repeat itself many times and may also be deliberately entered into by way of the 'attainment of fruition' ...It is also known as: **Purification by Knowledge and Vision.**

16. Fruition Knowledge (Phala-nana)

That is immediately followed by knowledge that belongs to the final stage and continues in the course of its predecessor. It abides in that same Nibbana, which is void of formations since it is the cessation of them. This is: **Fruition Knowledge.**

17. Knowledge of Reviewing (Paccavekkhana-nana)

The duration of the threefold Knowledge of Maturity, Path and Fruition is, however, not long. It is very short, and lasts for just an instant, like the duration of a single thought of noting. Subsequently there arises: **Knowledge of Reviewing.** Through this Knowledge of Reviewing the meditator discerns that the Insight Leading to Emergence came along with the very rapid function of noting, and immediately after the last phase of noting, the path consciousness entered into the cessation (of formations). This is: **Knowledge Reviewing the Path.**

He also discerns that the consciousness abided in this same state of cessation during the intervening period between the path and reviewing. This is: **Knowledge Reviewing Fruition.** He further discerns that the object just experienced is void of all formations. This is: **Knowledge Reviewing Nibbana.** Some meditators, [not all] have '**Reviewing of Defilement.**' ...

[The knowledge of reviewing defilement still remaining, is not obtained at the stage of Arahantship where all defilement have been eliminated. It may occur, but not necessarily so, at the lower three stages of stream-entry, etc.]

... After having reviewed in this way, the **meditator still continues** the practice of noting body and mental processes as they become evident. But while he is thus engaged in noting, the body and mental processes appear to him quite coarse, not subtle as before at the time of the **Knowledge of Equanimity about Formations.** This is because the knowledge present now, has the nature of the **Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away.**

For when the noble disciples (namely, stream-winners, etc.) resume the practice of Insight (by noting), the **Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away** usually arises at the beginning. This is the usual order in this respect. However, when some meditators emerge from the attainment of Path and Fruition, great faith, happiness, rapture and tranquillity, produced by virtue of the attainment, arise flooding the whole body. Owing to that, they are unable to carry out the practice of noting anything apparent at that time. Even if they double their effort and attempt to proceed with the practice of Insight, they will fail to discern the phenomena clearly and separately, at the moment of their occurrence.

They continue to experience only rapture, tranquillity, and happiness, which occur with great force. This state of mind, which is extraordinarily serene through strong faith prevailing, lasts for one hour, two hours, or more, without break. Because of this, meditators feel as if they were in some wide open space suffused with radiance and most delightful. The rapture and happiness, of a serene character, which then arise are praised by meditators thus: 'Surely, I have never before felt and experienced such happiness!' After two or three hours have passed, that faith, happiness, rapture and tranquillity will fade. The meditators can once again proceed with noting the body and mental processes as they occur, distinguishing them separately, and they will be able to discern them clearly. But at that time, too, first the **Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away** will appear.

18. Attainment of Fruition (Phalasampatti)

While he is thus engaged in noting, his Insight Knowledge will gradually grow, and soon will again reach the stage of **Equanimity about Formations**. If his power of concentration is still short of perfection, only the **Equanimity about Formations** will go on repeating itself. But if his concentration has reached perfection, then, in the case of one who does the Insight practice of noting with a view of attaining only to the First Path and Fruition, the Fruition Consciousness of the First Path alone reaches Cessation of Formations by way of the **attainment of fruition**. This occurs in precisely the same way as the Path and Fruition Consciousness that occurred earlier in the consciousness-sequence belonging to the initial attainment of the First Path. The only difference here is the capacity of the fruition attainment to last long.

One should also set one's mind resolutely upon the further tasks: to be able to repeat the achievement of Fruition attainment, to achieve it rapidly, and, at the time of achievement, to abide in it a long time, say for six, ten, fifteen or thirty minutes, or for an hour or more. As one who applies himself to achieving the attainment of Fruition, **Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away** will arise at the beginning. Advancing from there in due sequence, soon **Knowledge of Equanimity about Formations** will be reached. But when skill in the practice has been acquired, the **Knowledge of Equanimity about Formations** will arise quickly even after four or five acts of noting. If the power of concentration has reached perfection, the Fruition Consciousness will repeatedly become absorbed in Cessation by way of Fruition attainment. The mind can thus reach absorption even while one is walking up and down, or while taking a meal, and the Fruition attainment can remain for any length of time resolved upon. During the Fruition attainment, the mind will abide only in the **Cessation of Formations** and will not be aware of anything else.

19. The Higher Paths and Fruitions

When the meditator has thus become skilled in achieving the Fruition attainment, he should resolutely set his mind upon the task of attaining to the **Higher Paths and Fruitions**. What should now be done by one who has set himself that task? Just as before: **He should carry out the practice of noting Arising phenomena at the Six Sense Doors**. Hence, the meditator should note any body and mental process that becomes evident to him at the Six Sense Doors. While he is thus engaged, he will see, at the stage of **Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away**, that the first objects consisting of formations appear to him rather coarse, and that his mind is not well concentrated.

The development of Insight belonging to the Higher Paths is, in fact, not as easy as that of Insight belonging to the Fruition attainment already achieved by the meditator. It is in fact somewhat difficult, due to the fact that Insight has to be developed anew. It is, however, not so very difficult as it had been in the first time, when beginning the practice. In a single day, or even in a single hour, he can gain the **Knowledge of Equanimity about Formations**. This statement is made here, based on the experiences usually gained by persons of the present day who had to be given guidance from the start and who did not possess particularly strong intelligence. Here it is applied, by inference, to similar types of persons in general.

But although **Equanimity about Formations** has been attained, if the spiritual **faculties have not yet reached full maturity**, it just goes on repeating itself and he will not be able to attain to the next Higher Path within one, two, three, or more days. He abides merely in **Equanimity about Formations**. If, however, he then directs his mind to reach the Fruition already attained, he will attain it in two or three minutes. However, when the spiritual **faculties are mature**, one who practises Insight for attaining to a Higher Path will find that immediately after **Equanimity about Formations** has reached its culmination, the **Higher Path and Fruition** arise in the same way as before (i.e. as at the time of the First Path and Fruition), that is to say, it is preceded by the stages of Adaptation and Maturity. After the Fruition, the stages of Reviewing, etc., that follow are also the same as before. Anything else concerning the method of Practice for Insight and the Progress of Knowledge right up to Arahantship can be understood in precisely the same way as described. Hence there is no need to elaborate it any further.

CONCLUSION

Now these are my concluding good wishes: Just as a very delicious, appetising, tasty and nutritious meal can be appreciated fully only by one who has himself eaten it; in the same way, the whole series of Knowledges described here can be understood fully only by one who has himself seen it by direct experience, and not otherwise. So may all good people reach the Stage of Understanding of this whole series of Knowledges!

May they also strive to attain it!
MAHASI SAYADAW

APPENDIX

NIBBANA

The Words of the Buddha is Universal; His teachings were meant for gods and men; not confined to a narrow group of beings known as buddhists. Furthermore, His Words were timeless; that is to say, His teachings were neither meant only for the times in the past, nor only for the time He was alive. Timeless means His Words were not confined by time; His Words were functional in the very dim unfathomable past; slipping into the present time and into the very distant unimaginable span of time for incalculable aeons. His Words were meant for yesterdays, today, this moment and for time to come. In short, His Words are Eternal; in all the things He taught; He taught that all were impermanent; only Nibbana is Eternal or Timeless. In all the things that He taught; All lead to one destination; he taught that **Nibbana is the ultimate goal for all living beings**. This destination, this goal, is not what we conceive it to be; Nibbana is neither material nor abstract. It is of great importance then, that we should investigate what Nibbana is or is not. In the final analysis, we cannot hope to understand it fully until we realise it or reach it. Only the Buddha has direct knowledge of Nibbana.

DEFINITION

Nibbana is defined as that by which the flames of greed, hatred and delusion come to extinction. Here Nibbana is viewed as the means to which a person **extinguishes greed, hatred and delusion, the inherent mental defilement. Nibbana is also defined as the cessation of greed, hatred and delusion**; the total extinction and non arising of greed, hatred and delusion. That is what is known as Nibbana. So Nibbana can be defined in different ways; that which gets out of craving, that by which the flames of greed, hatred and delusion come to extinction, or just the extinction or cessation of greed, hatred and delusion. It is also the extinction of suffering because when there is greed, hatred and delusion there is suffering. So it is also the cessation or extinction of suffering. Nibbana is described in the Pali texts in many Suttas, in many words, in many ways. Generally Nibbana is described as that which is beyond logic or reason. We cannot understand Nibbana or we cannot really fully understand Nibbana by logic or just by reasoning. This is because ***Nibbana is a Dhamma to be realised by oneself. We cannot understand Nibbana just by listening, or just by reading, or just by thinking logically. We can only understand it through self-experience. It is beyond logic and reasoning.***

Since it is beyond logic and reasoning, it is said to be deep. Because it is deep it is difficult to get hold of; difficult to grasp its nature. So it is described as that which is difficult to see and difficult to realise. One has to apply the practice of insight meditation to truly realise Nibbana. One will have to spend not one life, but two, three, four, ten, twenty or even more life times to realise Nibbana. It is much more difficult to talk about Nibbana because we have no words to describe it. If we say Nibbana is a thing, then that will have the connotation that that something has a beginning and an end. Hence, to see it, to realise it is even more difficult.

Nibbana is described as that which can be realised only by those wise people who follow the practice. Nibbana cannot be reached just by wishing for it, just by reading, just by listening, just by talking about it. One realises it, reaches it, sees it through self-experience of the diligent practice of the **tenets of the Noble Eightfold Path, specifically Mindfulness or Insight Meditation**. It is realised by those wise people who take up the practice of Mindfulness Meditation. **'Wise people' means those who have gained penetrative knowledge into the nature of things**. Without the penetrative knowledge of the nature of things there can be no realisation of the truth. Nibbana is for those people who have gained insight wisdom, who have the penetrative knowledge into the nature of things and also penetrative knowledge of Nibbana itself.

Nibbana is also described as that which is to be realised by the wise each in his mind. Here we have 'each in his mind'. That means Nibbana realised by one person is his Nibbana and another person's realisation of Nibbana is his Nibbana and so on. There are different Nibbanas for different people. It is to be recognised by each in his mind. That means the other person cannot realise Nibbana for us. We have to realise Nibbana in our minds. We have to realise Nibbana ourselves. These are the general descriptions of Nibbana.

Now we come to the intrinsic nature of Nibbana. In the First Discourse, the Dhammacakapavattana Sutta the Blessed One taught **the Four Noble Truths**. When he described the Third Noble Truth he said: 'It is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, giving it up, relinquishing it, letting it go, not relying on it.' Here The Blessed One described Nibbana as 'the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving. That means the craving described as the Second Noble Truth. That is why he said here 'that same craving'.

So Nibbana is the total fading away and cessation of craving, giving it up, relinquishing it, letting it go, not relying on it. Here The Blessed One did not say that the Third Noble Truth or Nibbana is the cessation of suffering. He said that it is the cessation of craving because The Blessed One wanted to go to the root itself, to the cause itself. When the cause is destroyed, then the effect is also destroyed. So here Nibbana is the cessation of craving. When craving ceases along with ignorance, suffering ceases. So it is the same as saying the cessation of suffering. This fading away or cessation is total, never to come up again. Then it is explained or described as extinction of 'thirst, or that by which thirst comes to extinction. There are always two kinds of explanations for these words. One is description by abstract noun. For example Nibbana is extinction. The other is by way of something like the instrumental case, something by which thirst comes to extinction. It may mean the same thing, but it is from a little different angle.

Just the extinction of thirst, the extinction of craving is Nibbana. Also Nibbana is that by which craving comes to extinction. Nibbana serves as the object for Path consciousness, which when it arises, eradicates mental defilement or eradicates thirst or craving. It is the extinction of thirst or that by which thirst comes to extinction. In other Suttas Nibbana is described as extinction of greed, extinction of hatred, extinction of delusion, or that by which greed, hatred and delusion come to extinction. Always we have to understand in two ways; extinction or that by which something comes to extinction.

NIBBANA IS DESCRIBED AS UNCONDITIONED.

Nibbana does not arise. Nibbana is, but it does not exist. It does not exist as the other conditioned things exist. Nibbana is not caused by anything. Nibbana is not the result of anything. It is not conditioned by anything.

The next one is cessation of continuity and becoming. When there is continuity of becoming, when there is existing, it is called Samsara. When Samsara ceases, there is no more continuity of becoming, no more rebirth. Nibbana is the cessation of the continuity of becoming, the cessation of rebirth. Nibbana is described as the opposite of conditioned phenomena. Conditioned phenomena has an arising and a disappearing. Nibbana has no arising. Therefore Nibbana has no disappearing. So Nibbana is the opposite of conditioned phenomena which has arising. It is devoid of continuously arising phenomena.

If you look at the thoughts of your mind, you know that thought moments come one after another like the current of a river or like a stream. Since Nibbana has no arising, no beginning, there is nothing continuously arising in Nibbana. Nibbana is devoid of continuously arising phenomena. So it is the opposite of conditioned things because conditioned things are always arising and disappearing, arising and disappearing. They seem to be continuously going on.

Nibbana is described as **signless**. It manifests as signless. It has no sign, or shape, or form of Nibbana. One cannot describe Nibbana as a square thing, or a round thing, or as having color or whatever. Nibbana has no sign, no shape, no form. Conditioned phenomena has sign and form. We always see things with a shape and form. When we look at our hands, we think that we see the shape or form of the hand. What we actually see is the visible object, or visible matter, or visible data, and not the shape or form, but we think we see it.

This sign, or shape, or form cannot be got rid of easily even when you practise Vipassana meditation. It is always with these signs that we practise. When you concentrate on the breath, you see something at the tip of the nose going in and out. If you concentrate on the movements of the abdomen, you may see the shape of the abdomen rising and falling. It is very difficult to see the real nature of the rising and falling with the sign or the shape and form of the abdomen. But when you get to the higher levels of Vipassana meditation, there is a stage where meditators see the **dissolution of things** rather than the arising of things. Meditators see arising and disappearing, arising and disappearing. Later on disappearing becomes more prominent than arising for them.

At that stage they begin to lose seeing forms and shapes. They cannot see any form or any shape. They just see the nature of things, not the shape or form of things, Even such Vipassana knowledge which does not take Nibbana as object can see things without sign. When there is Nibbana, it becomes signless. There is no sign of Nibbana. We will come to that later. The conditioned phenomena always have signs, or shapes or forms. We want to be reborn in a better existence, in a better life. So there is this desire or this making effort to become better. Nibbana has no such endeavour because when one realises Nibbana, one has reached the utmost or top most level. There is no more function to perform. Nibbana is that which is free from the endeavor for the better.

Nibbana is described as **non-relinking**. In the world of conditioned phenomena or in the world of Samsara we have relinking. That means rebirth, one birth after another, always going on and on and on. When one attains Nibbana, there is no more relinking, no more rebirth. When an Arahant or a Buddha dies, there is no more rebirth for them. Nibbana is the opposite of conditioned phenomena which has relinking. So it is non-relinking. Nibbana is also described as **freedom; freedom from mental defilement**, freedom from suffering, freedom from the round of rebirths. These descriptions are mostly of negative nature. Nibbana is also described in **positive terms**. We now have a positive term, **Sukha (happiness)**. Nibbana is described as happiness. However we must understand that here happiness is not the happiness we are familiar with. It is Sukha without sensation. Even during the time of The Blessed One, a monk asked the Venerable Sariputta about this happiness. Venerable Sariputta had said: 'Nibbana is happiness. Nibbana is happiness.' The monk asked: '*How can Nibbana be happiness since there is no sensation?*' Venerable Sariputta replied: 'That there is no sensation itself is happiness.' **'Happiness' here means peacefulness.** Happiness in the world is not the same as the happiness described here. Happiness here is peacefulness.

In one of the Suttas, The Blessed One described different kinds of happiness from enjoying life, happiness from enjoying sensual pleasures. That is a kind of happiness. Then there is jhana happiness which is better than that happiness. In jhana happiness there are no sensual pleasures, no enjoyment of sensual pleasures. Yet **The Blessed One said that the happiness of jhana is better than the happiness of sensual pleasures.** Furthermore second jhana happiness is better than first jhana happiness and so on.

Finally the Sutta comes to the happiness of the attainment of cessation. The happiness of Nibbana is the best happiness. It is not mixed with any greed or with attachment. It is also free of worry, anxiety and so on. It is real happiness, happiness which is peacefulness actually.

Nibbana is described as **Dapa (island)**. These are all metaphorical. It is described as an island because it serves as an island when we travel in the sea. It is like a place where we long to be. It is called refuge—Tana, Lena, Parayana. It is described as **peace (Santi)**. It is also described as **truth (Sacca)**.

Nibbana is the cessation of mental defilement, the cessation of greed, hatred and delusion. 'Cessation' really means 'not arising'. When the Path consciousness eradicates mental defilement, the mental defilement it eradicates are not past, not present, not future. The tendency toward greed, hatred and delusion is destroyed at the moment of Path consciousness. That tendency cannot be said to belong to the past, the present, or the future. That is why the cessation or the extinction of these mental defilement does not belong to any time, not to the past, the present or the future. If it does not belong to past, present or future, it comes to be known as permanent. It is always there. We do not know where, but it is always there. It is described as **permanent (Dhuvā)**.

It is also described as **excellent (Panita)** and **immortal (Amata)**. It is immortal because it has no beginning and so it has no end. If it has a beginning, it must have an end because it cannot escape this law of nature. When we come across this word 'Amata' (deathless or immortal), we always think in terms of this existence. We want to have this existence. We want to have a beginning, but we don't want to have an end. We always think in that way. If we want to be deathless, we must have no birth. 'Amata' means no birth, no death, no beginning, no end. That is deathless. If we have beginning as human beings, then we will come to an end as human beings. We cannot escape death. 'Immortal' really means no beginning and so no dying, no end. These are the descriptions of Nibbana in the Suttas and there are many more.

Now let us look at the characteristics of Nibbana. Whenever we understand something, we must understand by way of **characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause**. You will find the characteristic and others in the Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification) in the chapter on aggregates. Every Dhamma, everything taught in Abhidhamma, is to be understood by way of these three or four aspects. The first one is characteristic. Nibbana is also to be understood from these aspects.

The characteristic of Nibbana is just **peace, peacefulness**. Its function or quality is not to die which means **not to disappear, or not to be extinguished, not to cease**. Its function is **to comfort**. When one realises Nibbana, one is comforted. One doesn't have to worry about one's future. Its function or its quality is to comfort. It is manifested **as signless**. 'Manifested' here means manifested to the yogi, to the person who has really realised or who has really seen Nibbana for himself. That can come at the moment of Path consciousness.

Nibbana is manifested to these people as signless, as no sign. We cannot say that Nibbana is round or square, or long, or short, or luminous, or whatever. Those who perceive **Nibbana as luminous**, as similar to a country or a place are erroneous as the manifestation of **Nibbana is signlessness**. It manifests itself to meditators as signless. When meditators realise Nibbana, when meditators see Nibbana for themselves, they see Nibbana as possessing no sign, no form, no figure, no duration and no measure. Now after understanding what Nibbana is, let us see what **Nibbana is not**. Nibbana is not mere destruction. Nibbana is not mere nothing. Nibbana is the cessation of mental defilement. As the cessation of mental defilement, Nibbana is. Nibbana is something, but not nothingness or mere destruction.

Nibbana is not the result of the extinction of craving. The extinction of craving comes at the moment of Path consciousness. Path consciousness takes Nibbana as object. Nibbana is not the result of the extinction of craving; it is the extinction of craving or it is instrumental in the Path extinguishing craving.

When Path consciousness arises it takes Nibbana as an object and eradicates mental defilement. Nibbana is that by which the flames of greed, hatred and delusion come to extinction.

Nibbana is not a place, or a realm, or a position. It is not a place to go to. It is not a realm to reach. It is not a position to obtain. Whenever we talk about Nibbana, we think in terms of existence because we are on this shore and we cannot see the other shore. Until we reach the other shore, we will not see Nibbana clearly. So when we talk of Nibbana we may think of it as a place to go to, or as a realm, or as a position, or that which we can experience with the senses. Nibbana is not that. It is just a state, a state consisting of the extinction of mental defilement and the extinction of suffering.

There is only one Nibbana. As to the way it is made known there are two kinds of Nibbana. It is important to understand these two kinds of Nibbana. One is called '**Sa-upadisesa Nibbana**' which is made known by way of there being aggregates of clinging remaining. That means the Nibbana before the death of an Arahant. When a person becomes an Arahant, he has eradicated all mental defilement and he sees Nibbana directly. At the moment of becoming an Arahant and after becoming an Arahant there remain with him the aggregates because he still has the physical body and he still has his mind.

He still has these aggregates of clinging but the mental defilement are gone. Nibbana which an Arahant experiences or which an Arahant takes as an object before his death is called 'Sa-upadisesa'.

The second one is called '**Anupadisesa**'. This is Nibbana which is made known by way of there being no aggregates of clinging remaining. That means after the death of an Arahant, Nibbana becomes something which has no aggregates of clinging remaining. That means when the Arahant dies, then the aggregates of clinging disappear, not to arise again anymore; at the death of an Arahant Nibbana is called 'Anupadisesa'. It is also called '**Khandha PariNibbana**'. 'Khandha' means aggregates. So it is the extinction or blowing out of aggregates. That means the remaining aggregates of an Arahant (his body and mind) become extinct or blown out.

Nibbana is unconditioned, so it is devoid of all conditioned things. There is no greed, hatred or delusion in Nibbana. Nibbana is '**Sunnata**'. **Nibbana is Animitta**. That means free of signs, no signs of greed, hatred or delusion, no signs of all conditioned things. It is also called '**Appanihita**'. That is it is free from the hankering of greed, hatred and delusion.

LET YOUR AIM BE NIBBANA Ajahn Chah

It is the appropriate time for us to study the Dhamma in order to increase our **mindfulness and wisdom**. When it comes to **taking precepts**, for example, a monk will proclaim the precepts and the laypeople will vow to undertake them. Don't misunderstand what is going on. The truth is that **morality is not something that can be given**. Morality resides with the **intentions** of people. If you have the conscious **determination** to refrain from **harmful activities and wrongdoing by way of body and speech**, then morality is coming about within you. So really, whenever we wish to 'receive' morality and Dhamma, we have them right then. It is just like the air that surrounds us everywhere. Whenever we breathe, we take it in. All manner of good and evil are like that. If we wish to do good, we can do it anywhere, at any time. We can do it alone, or together with others. Evil is the same. We can do it with a large or small group, in a hidden or open place. It is like that.

Morality is normal for all humans to practise. A person who has no morality is no different from an animal. We are born into this world, and all of us will naturally have the afflictions of desire, anger and delusion. Desire makes us crave after various things and causes the mind to be in a state of imbalance and turmoil. Nature is like that. It will just not do to let the mind go after these impulses of craving. It only leads to heat and distress. People are born with physical form and mind. In the beginning these things are born, in the middle they change, and in the end they are extinguished. This is ordinary; this is their nature. We cannot do much to alter these facts. We train our minds as best we can, and when the time comes we have to let go of it all. It is beyond the ability of humans to change this or get beyond it. ***The Dhamma that the Buddha taught is something to be applied while we are here, for making actions, words and thoughts correct and proper.*** His Dhamma is a teaching that is above and beyond the world. We are in the world. We were born into this world; he taught us to transcend the world, not being prisoner to worldly ways and habits. The authentic Dhamma of the Buddha is not something pointing far away. It teaches self. It teaches about ***atta, self***, and that things are not really self. That is all. ***All the teachings that the Buddha gave were pointing out that 'this is not a self, this does not belong to a self, there is no such thing as ourselves or others.'***

Here, when we contact this, we can't really read it, we don't 'translate' the Dhamma correctly. We still think 'this is me, this is mine.' We attach to things and invest them with meaning. When we do this, we can't yet disentangle from them; the involvement deepens and the mess gets worse and worse. If we know that there is no self, that body and mind are really anatta, as the Buddha taught, then when we keep on investigating, eventually we will come to realisation of the actual condition of selflessness. We will genuinely realise that there is no self or other.

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTIC OF FIRE ELEMENT

Sometimes when the sun shines and the fan stops, then you may observe 'hot, hot'. We have to take some time to observe it (i.e. to be patient) until it has stopped. The more we observe it, the deeper the concentration on it. The deeper the concentration becomes, the more penetrating our insight into it. Then we come to realise that it is just 'hot'. We are not aware of the body, limb, hand or leg. What we are realising at that time is just heat, 'hot, hot', that's all. When we see it is just 'heat' or feeling of 'hot' without being conscious of the body or the limbs, it means we are realising the specific characteristics of fire element, *Tejo dhatu* without any idea of 'mine' or 'I'. That realisation of the specific characteristic of fire element removes the idea of 'I' or 'you', a 'person' or a 'being'. Self identity has been removed. Then, however severe the heat may be, we are not affected by this heat because there is neither 'we', 'you' nor 'I'. What really exist at that moment is just 'heat' in your mind so there is no 'person', no 'being'. It is just the natural process of heat or fire element. Then we don't have attachment to it because what we see is just heat. We just don't have any aversion to it because we see it as just heat. If we take it to be a hand or a body, then we may think 'Oh, my body is very hot, my hands are very hot'. Then because of that 'my', you have the idea of an 'I', a 'person', a 'being'. *Sakkaya ditthi*, *Atta ditthi* comes to your mind.

Then you can't endure that heat which your body has because you don't see that heat as just heat. What you see is the hot body, the hot hand. Then you take this heat to be 'me' and 'mine'. Then you have the idea of a 'person' or a 'being'. That is why there arises aversion to that heat. That is also why there arises attachment to heat when you like it, for example during the winter. Why do you like it? Because you take it to be a 'person' or a 'being', an 'I' or a 'you'. If you see that heat as just a natural process of heat and you do not take it to be me or mine, then you don't need anything; air conditioning or central heating system.

So while you are sitting for meditation whatever feeling you have, heat or cold, you should observe each as they arise. Why do you need to observe heat and cold as they arise? To realise hotness of heat is its true nature; to realise coldness of cold is its true nature. What then is the true nature of heat or cold? The specific characteristic and the general characteristic of the fire element is their true nature. So if you observe either heat or cold at the moment of its arising and if your concentration is good enough you realise it separately from you and you realise it without being conscious of yourself or your body or your limbs. It means you are realising the natural process of heat as specific characteristic of fire element. Then you don't identify that heat with you and there is no idea of a person or a being. *Sakkaya ditthi*, *Atta ditthi* has been destroyed. All mental defilement arise dependent on the idea of 'I' or 'you', *Sakkaya ditthi*, *Atta ditthi*. When you don't have that idea of 'I' or 'you', there won't arise any mental defilement. If you are able to realise this is just natural process of heat or cold; this is just natural process of movement or motion, then you don't identify these processes with you, then there is no 'I' or 'mine' regarding the process.

Because you have removed idea of 'I' or 'mine', a person or a being regarding these processes of heat, cold, movement or motion, there won't arise any defilement at all. This is because in the realisation of natural process of heat, cold, movement or motion, there isn't anything to be attached to it or to have aversion to it. But if we identify that natural process with 'us' or 'you', then there is a person who has desire to be cold, to have the fan turning. That desire is a defilement. It arises dependent on the idea of 'I' who feels hot. That is why we need to realise the specific characteristic of at least these four primary material elements to remove the idea of individuality, personality, self or soul. That is why we have to be mindful of whatever arises in our body and mind as it really occurs. When we have realised the specific characteristics of these primary elements it is not so difficult for us to realise the specific or individual characteristic of mental states too. If we are able to realise the specific or individual characteristic of mental state, we don't take them to be a person or a being. Pleasure is merely pleasure. Feeling is merely feeling. Memory is merely memory. Thinking is merely thinking. They are all things which are 'merely' that. Happiness is merely happiness; suffering is merely suffering. Good is merely good, evil is merely evil. Everything exists 'merely' thus. There is no real happiness or real suffering. ***There are just the merely existing conditions.***

Merely happy, merely suffering, merely hot, merely cold, merely a being or a person.

You should keep looking to see that things are only so much. Only earth, only water, only fire, only air. We should keep on 'reading' these things and investigating this point. Eventually **our perception will change; we will have a different feeling about things.** The conviction that there is self and things belonging to self will gradually come undone. When this sense of things is removed, then the opposite perception will keep increasing steadily. So we will have the exact same feeling about our existence in this world. We will not cry or moan over things. We will not be tormented or burdened by them. They remain the same things as they were before, but our feeling and understanding of them has changed. Now our knowledge will be exalted and we will see truth. We will have attained supreme vision and authentic knowledge of that Dhamma which we ought to know.

The Buddha taught the Dhamma that we ought to know and to see. Where is the Dhamma that we ought to know and see? **It is right here within us, this body and mind.** We have it already; we should come to know and see it. Wherever the mind has a lot of attachment, just there will we experience intense suffering, intense grief, intense difficulty. The place we experience the most problems is the place we have the most attraction, longing and concern. Please try to resolve this. Now, while you still have life and breath, keep on looking at it and reading it, until you are able to 'translate' it and solve the problem.

Whatever we are experiencing as part of our lives now, one day we will be parted from it. So don't just pass the time. **Practise spiritual cultivation.** Take this parting, this separation and loss, as your object of contemplation right now, in the present, until you are clever and skilled in it, until you can see that it is ordinary and natural. When there is anxiety and regret over it, have the wisdom to recognise the limits of this anxiety and regret, knowing what they are according to the truth. If you can consider things in this way, then **wisdom will arise.** But people generally do not want to investigate. Whenever suffering occurs, wisdom can arise there, if we investigate. Wherever pleasant or unpleasant experience happens, wisdom can arise there. If we know happiness and suffering for what they really are, then we know the Dhamma. If we know the Dhamma, we know the world clearly; **if we know the world clearly, we know the Dhamma.**

To put the teaching of the Buddha in a nutshell, the point is to transform one's view. It is possible to change it. It only requires looking at things, and then it happens. Having been born, we will experience aging, illness, death and separation. These things are right here. We don't need to look up at the sky or down at the earth. The Dhamma that we need to see and to know can be seen right here within us, every moment of every day. When there is a birth, we are filled with joy. When there is a death, we grieve. That's how we spend our lives. These are the things we need to know about, but we still have not really looked into them and seen the truth. We are stuck deep in this ignorance. We ask, when will we get the chance to see the Dhamma; but it is right here to be seen in the present. This is the Dhamma we should learn about and see. This is what the Buddha taught about. He did not teach about gods and demons and nagas, protective deities, jealous demigods, nature spirits and the like. He taught the things that one should know and see. These are truths that we really should be able to realise. External phenomena are like this, exhibiting the three characteristics. Internal phenomena, i.e., this body, are like this, too. The truth can be seen in the hair, nails, skin and teeth. Previously they flourished. Now they are diminished. The hair thins and becomes gray. It is like this. Do you see? Or will you say it is something you can't see? You certainly should be able to see with a little investigation.

If we really take an interest in all of these and contemplate seriously, we can gain genuine knowledge. If these were something that could not be done, the Buddha would not have bothered to talk about it. How many tens and hundreds of thousands of his followers have come to realisation? If one is really keen on looking at things, one can come to know. The Dhamma is like that. Normally we speak in terms of *atta*, self, talking about me and mine, you and yours, but the mind can remain uninterruptedly in the realisation of *anatta*, selflessness. Think about it. When we talk to children, we speak in one way; when dealing with adults, we speak in another way. If we use words appropriate to children to speak with adults, or use adults' words to speak with children, it won't work out. In the proper use of conventions, we have to know when we are talking to children. It can be appropriate to talk about me and mine, you and yours, and so forth, but inwardly the mind is Dhamma, dwelling in realisation of *anatta*. You should have this kind of foundation.

If we really consider all of this and investigate thoroughly to know the truth, then we will enter the correct path. Our way of living will become correct. Thinking will be correct. Our action and speech will be correct. Why is it that we have suffering? Because of lack of knowledge, not knowing where things begin and end, not understanding the causes; this is ignorance. When there is this ignorance, then various desires arise, and, driven by them, we create the causes of suffering. Then the result must be suffering. When you gather firewood and light a match to it, and then you expect not to have any heat, what are your chances? You are creating a fire, aren't you? This is origination itself.

Nibbana paccayam hotu - one need not aim at anything or wish for anything at all. ***Just aim for Nibbana.*** All manner of becoming and birth, merit and virtue in the worldly way do not reach there. Making merits and skillful kamma, hoping it will cause us to attain to some better state, we don't need to be wishing for a lot of things; just aim directly for Nibbana. Wanting sila, wanting tranquility - we just end up in the same old place- it's not necessary to desire these things - we should just wish for the place of cessation. Back and forth through the rounds of births, that is all, just changing appearances, appearing with a different face next time, but we don't know it. Just coming and going, going and returning in the rounds of samsara, not really going anywhere. It is just staying there. So the Buddha said, ***Nibbana paccayam hotu; let your only aim be Nibbana.*** Strive hard to accomplish this.

But the important point, really, is that we have life now, in the present. We are experiencing the results of past deeds right now. When beings are born into the world, that is the results of past actions appearing. Whatever happiness or suffering beings have in the present are the fruits of what they have done previously. Born into this world, one can transcend the world. Beyond the world, knowing the world - this is the aim of the Buddha's teaching. He did not aim for people to suffer. He desired people to attain to peace, to know the truth of things and realise wisdom. This is Dhamma, knowing the nature of things. Whatever exists in the world is nature. There is no need to be in confusion about it. Wherever you are, the same laws apply.

MOMENTARY CONCENTRATION (Dr. Henepola Gunaratana.)

Whereas the sequence of training undertaken by the samatha-yanika meditator is evident and unproblematic, an uncertainty appears to have cropped up in the case of the Vipassana-yanika's approach. This uncertainty lies in the concentration he uses to provide a basis for insight. Concentration is needed in order to see and know things as they are. The standard order of practice repeated countless times throughout the canon is moral discipline, concentration and wisdom; with concentration declared to be the foundation for wisdom. The Buddha calls concentration the supporting condition for 'the knowledge and vision of things as they really are', while 'one who lacks right concentration is deprived of the supporting condition for knowledge and vision of things as they really are.'

Finally, in the sequence of the Seven Purification through which all meditators must pass, the Second Purification; Purification of Mind (cittavisuddhi); is shown to precede and support the five subsequent Purifications that begin with Purification of View (ditthivissuddhi). Purification of Mind is generally defined as access and absorption concentration, and the last Five Purifications as the wisdom of insight and the path. Since each Purification has to be fulfilled in due order before undertaking the next, the same problem surfaces of accounting for the concentration the Vipassana-yanika uses to arrive at insight. The solution to this problem is found in a type of concentration distinct from the access and absorption concentration pertaining to the vehicle of serenity. This type of mental unification is called; '**Momentary Concentration**' (khanika-samadhi). Despite its name, Momentary Concentration does not signify a single moment of concentration amidst a current of distracted thoughts. Rather, it denotes: ***A dynamic concentration which flows from object to object in the ever-changing flux of phenomena, retaining a constant degree of intensity and collectedness sufficient to purify the mind of the hindrances.*** Momentary Concentration arises in the samatha-yanika meditator simultaneously with his post-jhanic attainment of insight, but for the Vipassana-yanika; ***Momentary Concentration develops naturally and spontaneously in the course of his Insight Practice without his having to fix the mind upon a Single Exclusive Object. Hence, the follower of the vehicle of insight does not omit concentration altogether from his training, but develops it in a different manner from the practitioner of serenity.***

Skipping over the jhanas, he goes directly into contemplation on the five aggregates, and by observing them constantly from moment to moment acquires Momentary Concentration as an accompaniment of his investigations. This Momentary Concentration fulfills the same function as the basic jhana of the serenity-vehicle, providing the foundation of mental clarity needed for insight to emerge. The importance of Momentary Concentration in the vehicle of insight is testified to both by the classical Theravada exegetical literature and by modern exponents of the 'dry Vipassana' approach. Mahasi Sayadaw explains that a meditator begins the development of insight by attending to the diverse mental and bodily processes that become manifest to him, making the tactile process of the rising and falling of the abdomen his basic object of mindfulness.

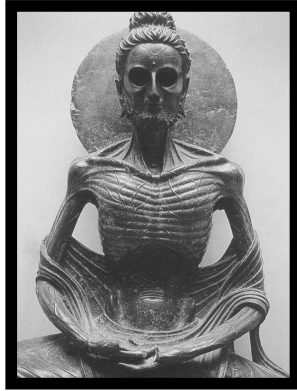
At first, during the early part of his practice, his mind tends to be distracted by wandering thoughts, but with time his thought process of noting becomes well concentrated. When he can notice the objects that appear continuously, undisturbed by hindrances, his practice has arrived at Momentary Concentration: ***While practising the exercise of noting with 'unhindered mind', the noting mind will get more close to and fixed at whichever object is noted, and the act of noting will proceed without break. At that time there arises in him, in uninterrupted succession, 'the concentration of mind lasting for a moment', directed to each object noticed.*** The Sayadaw holds that this Momentary Concentration claims the place of Purification of Mind in the dry insight (Vipassana) worker's course of development. He states that though it 'has only momentary duration, its power of resistance to being overwhelmed by opposition corresponds to that of access concentration.

Momentary concentration is in contrast to One pointed concentration; it is a fluid type of mental collectedness consisting in the uninterrupted continuity of awareness engaged in noting the passing succession of objects. Its objects are varied and changing but its force of concentration remains constant. This force fixes the mind on the object as though fixing it in absorption, holding the hindrances at bay and building up power of mental purification. For this reason Momentary Concentration can be understood as implicitly included in access concentration in the standard definition of Purification of Mind as consisting in access and absorption.

Evam me sutam

ekam samayam bhagavà kuràsu viharati kammàsadammanàma
kurànam nigamo. Tatra kho bhagavà bhikkhà àmantesi 'bhikkhavo'ti.
'Bhadante'ti te bhikkhu bhagavato paccassosum bhagavà
etadavoca:

Ekàyano ayam bhikkhave maggo sattànam visuddhiyà
sokapariddavànam samatikkamàya dukkhadomanassànam
atthangamàya nàyassa adhigamàya nibbànassa sacchikiriyàya,
yadidam cattàro satipatthànà.



Thus have I heard:

At one time, the Blessed One was living in Kurus, where there
was a market town of the Kurus, named Kammasadamma. There
the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus and
spoke as follows:

'This is the only way, bhikkhus, for the purification of beings, for the
overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain
and grief, for reaching the Noble Path, for the realisation of
Nibbana, namely:

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

